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ABSTRACT

The seven articles in this journal issue focus on the relationship between theory and practice in human communication. Topics discussed in the articles are (1) a speech theory of human communication, (2) first principles for an "act" based theory of communication, (3) the uses of a theory of communication, (4) communication pragmatism, (5) a symbolic convergence theory of communication, (6) communication competence, and (7) semiotic phenomenology. (FL)

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JOURNAL OF APPLIED COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Symposium: Application of Communication Theory To Communication Practice

Volume Ten, Number One, Spring, 1982

Kenneth N. Cissna, Editor

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JOURNAL OF APPLIED COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

VOLUME TEN, NUMBER ONE SPRING, 1982

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Editor's Note

This issue of *JACR* is devoted to presenting new and fresh perspectives on an old problem: "What is the relation between theory and practice?" In this case, specifically, "What is the relation between theory and practice in human communication?" Aristotle, the author of the oldest surviving treatise on human communication, clearly understood the usefulness of theory. Karl Marx, an astute commentator on human affairs, saw theory and practice, or understanding and action, as part of the same act, *praxis*. For Marx, theory is formed in and through action; action can be effective only to the extent that one's theory is accurate—theory and practice are inseparably joined. Kurt Lewin, a pioneer scholar in the human sciences, is often quoted as having remarked, "There is nothing so practical as a good theory." The views of generations of scholars not withstanding, theory often has a very different image—the product of the lofty, ivory-tower scholar, completely removed from the real world, spinning idealistic tales of how life should be. "It sounds good in theory but doesn't work in practice" or "It's merely a theory" suggest theories are unsupported speculations of no value to the concerned community-action leader, social worker, therapist, trainer, teacher, or other person wanting to act with desired effect in the world. Practical action is divorced from theoretical ideas.

Consideration of the dialectic between theory and practice is important and timely for human communication scholars and practitioners. We are dedicated to contributing to the development of human communication theory, but also believe in the practical applications of our work, and are committed to helping people, groups, and organizations improve their communication. But most communication consultants and trainers find themselves teaching interview communication skills, giving tips on effective public speaking, or helping a person cope with communication apprehension. More rarely are communication scholars asked to discuss communication *theory* as a *practical measure.*

The *Journal of Applied Communication Research* is committed to furthering the quality of applied communication research in part through advancing the role of theory in research and application. In this issue of *JACR* seven contemporary human communication scholars and theorists accept this challenge: To describe the practical applications and implications of their theories of human communication. We hope their answers will encourage you to ask even better questions.

Brief responses of up to 500 words to these articles, either individually or collectively, are invited and will be considered for publication in the next issue.

Kenneth N. Cissna
Editor

JACR SPRING, 1982, *10*(1), 1-8

A SPEECH THEORY OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION: IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

FRANK E.X. DANCE

The data for a speech theory of human communication (STHC) are constituted of all those acts of communication by humans in which speech plays a part, with emphasis placed upon the speech aspect of those human communicative acts (Dance, 1982). The range of the STHC thus includes all speech and spoken language phenomena as the terms "speech," and "spoken language," are understood within the theory's taxonomy. The role played by speech and spoken language in human communication is a natural focus of the STHC since the theory maintains that the fact that humans speak accounts in a major fashion for the unique attributes of human communication. Speech, the theory maintains, is a narrow but critical human behavior which informs a broad range of human behaviors. Speech, which is distinct from, although a development of, vocalization, creates language which speech then joins with, as spoken language, to enable thought, which thought is reflexively used to ennoble or elevate spoken language.

The overall communication of humans includes behaviors resulting from our animal heritage (zoosemiotic aspects of the communicative behavior of humans) as well as uniquely human communicative behaviors (anthroposemiotic aspects of the communication behavior of humans) (Sebeok, 1968). The content of human communication, or of communication unique to humans, is spoken language. Thus the domain of the STHC is all uniquely human communication which is communication utilizing spoken language or a derivative of spoken language. *The speech theory of human communication suggests that the fact that human language is spoken in its normal ontogenesis and development may serve as a principal explanatory variable for the development and effects of specifically human communication.* Although the theory is at its present stage a developmental theory of restricted range, I believe that we may justifiably make projections from early stages of human development so as to comment upon probable indi-

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vidual and social effects of speech on human communication across the life span.

A taxonomy of primitive terms prefaces and accompanies the STHC (Dance, 1982). The taxonomy's goal is to increase the reader's understanding of the theory's component concepts so as to enable the taxonomic users to proceed from a common terminological and conceptual base in their consideration of the theory as well as to allow the users a common point of reference when evaluating alternate usages of the terms used to identify important concepts. Without a familiarity with the taxonomic distinctions a reader may presume agreement with the theory where no such agreement may exist, or contrarily may see differences where such differences are illusory. The taxonomy implies that precision in language facilitates precision in thought.

The STHC may be set forth in a catalog of propositions. The propositions, while not constituting the theory, are reflective of an underlying implicit and generative model which is capable of generating the propositions. The propositions are meant to stand as general theoretical observations although they are not stated in the testable form suitable to hypotheses. For each STHC proposition it is possible to generate numerous hypotheses stated in testable form. The testing of such hypotheses is one manner in which the theory is open to falsification. In its current stage of refinement the theory generates two pre-theoretical propositions and six theoretical propositions. Only the theoretical propositions, in what seems to be a natural developmental order, are included in this essay (Dance, 1982).

STHC Propositions

1. *Vocalization is prior to and different from speech in humans.*

The natural utterance of sounds by human neonates is not learned but is genetically determined and has much in common with the vocalizations of the newborn of some other species.

2. *Speech is uniquely human.*

Attributes such as the development of the supra-laryngeal vocal tract with the accompanying bent double-tube testify both to the human uniqueness of speech and to the fact that speech is not an overlaid function as the concept of "overlaid function" is commonly used and understood. There are pre-conceptual roots of speech.

3. *Speech leads to the development of human conceptualization.*

The infant's oral-aural experience initiates and develops the in-

fant's sense of contrast which is considered the root of conceptual thought and reason. There are pre-speech roots of conceptualization.

4. *Language is culturally determined.*

Although the theory maintains that the characteristics of human language derive from the characteristics of speech, both phylogenetically and ontogenetically, natural languages are culturally determined and are learned by the child rather than being genetically determined and developed by the child through the process of maturation alone.

5. *The fusion of genetically determined speech with culturally determined language produces a qualitatively new and uniquely human phenomenon termed spoken language.*

There is a movement from the infant use of sign to the infant/child use of symbol and then to the jointure of signs and symbols in spoken language.

6. *The fact that in its normal ontogenesis and development human language is spoken serves as a principal explanatory variable for the constitution and effects of specifically human communication.*

The spoken language attribute of human communication accounts, in a major way, for decentering, symbols, predication, conceptualization, a sense of time, values, intent, and ambiguity—all of which are among the unique attributes of specifically human communication.

Any theory should be open to falsification. Routes to falsification may be identified by trying to test the implications and applications of theoretical propositions. In the remainder of this essay each of the earlier listed STHC propositions will be examined in terms of the proposition's implications for human communication and in terms of the proposition's possible practical applications as such implications and applications are currently discernible. Michael Cole once said that an idea is only as powerful as the uses to which it may be put. The robustness and the usefulness of the STHC may well be mirrored in its practical implications and applications.

STHC Implications and Applications

Proposition number one, "Vocalization is prior to and different from speech in humans," implies that on the level of reflex vocalization, utterances by humans (at whatever age) share commonalities with the utterances of other life forms. Understanding the part played by vocalization in the behaviors of other animals may assist us in under-

standing the role of zoosemiotic utterance in our own behaviors. The morphological and neurological correlates of animal vocalization should be studied so as to enhance our understanding of the role played by those structures in human beings. Practically, an understanding of this theoretical issue may assist us in analyzing vocal, but nonverbal, communicative behaviors that humans share with other life forms. In addition, a fuller understanding of vocalization may increase our insight as to what constitutes uniquely human speech.

Proposition number two, "Speech is uniquely human," implies a species specificity demanding concentrated study and research so as to discern the impact of speech on the human condition. Is the fact that human infants develop speech while the young of other animals do not a fact that is trivial, or is it a difference that makes a significant difference? The recent studies and projects dealing with teaching non-human primates a form of human language need to be considered in terms of the species specificity of speech in humans. To this time all of the researchers involved seem to agree that the non-human primates have not been able to learn to speak (Dance, 1977). The claims are that the primate subjects have acquired a manually signed "form of human language" (in the case of Washoe and her successors) or the manipulation of tokens representing a "form of human language" (in the case of Sarah and her successors) or keyboard figures representing a "form of human language" (in the case of Lana and her successors). If the fact that human communication is normally constituted a *spoken* language has any *non-trivial* significance, then that non-triviality should be open to examination as it is reflected in the non-human primate efforts after the acquisition of a form of human language. The outcomes of these research efforts have quite important practical effects in terms of ethics (e.g., if non-human primates can acquire human language, where exactly should the line be drawn in terms of animal experimentation; what about possible marketplaces; what about the significance for understanding possible approaches to communicating with possible guests from outer space?).

This propositional viewpoint also adds significance to the consideration of whether or not speech may still be considered an "overlaid function" in the human being (Routhier, 1979). Flowing from contemporary research interests there has developed a concern for contrasting spoken language with signed language (Bellugi, 1980). Scholars have traditionally accepted the view that human language always had a spoken root. The assertion has now been made that it is evident that there are natural human languages that have a non-spoken, a gestured genesis. This particular assertion needs careful ex-

amination before acceptance. The possibility exists that the birth of voluntarism in the human infant may be associated with the acquisition of uniquely human speech—certainly the earliest signs of free will in human behavior has both implications and applications for a more fulsome understanding of the human condition. Finally, there is also some evidence suggesting a relationship between the acquisition of uniquely human speech and the infant's development of a personal sense of time and of timing (Yingling, 1981). Since time is so central to human experience, this suggested relationship also carries important implications for applications in human communication.

The third proposition, "Speech leads to the development of human conceptualization," carries such profound implications for the acquisition of higher mental processes in the individual human being as well as in society at large that practical applications seem countless. If indeed speech plays a determining role in the individual acquisition of higher mental processes, then there must be a determined and sustained effort to see how this reality may be used for the furtherance of conceptualization and ratiocination in the individual and in the human race (Dance, 1979; Nordstrom, 1981, Sharpe, 1980). One may imagine prosthetic devices (which may be successfully moved from imagination to reality) that could be implanted in the infant so as to enhance the development of contrast—this would be especially important in the case of those infants whom nature has deprived of normally functioning oral-aural pathways. In the absence of such prosthetic devices this proposition directs our attention to means of initiating and augmenting contrast through alternate sensory modalities. Since there is already some convincing evidence implying that the mode through which a human infant acquires human language (modes including oral-aural, gestural-visual, et al.) is significantly correlated with the child's development of self-concept (Zak-Dance, 1979), and since there are numerous studies investigating the relationship between human communication and self-esteem, applications of this proposition are manifest. How may we use speech to heighten the development of individual self-concept, or of individual self-esteem? How may speech be used to encourage the development of positive self-esteem in the individual within an organization and from thence the level of self-esteem of the organization as a whole? The proposition also implies that speech is not only of the essence in the genesis of higher mental processes, of self-concept, and of self-esteem but that speech also plays an essential role in the maintenance of each of these important human attributes. If speech is eliminated in the individual, there is often a corresponding decrement in one or more of these attributes. If speech were to be eliminated in

the race, what would be the effects upon social conscience, upon the entire human heritage, upon humaneness? Examining such a negative effects may well suggest results of enhancement of speech for the individual and for society. Practical applications of this proposition may be made in child-development, teaching, the encouragement of third world countries, and on and on.

Proposition four, "Language is culturally determined," implies that the impact of speech upon the human milieu is reflected in the development of each and every culturally acquired human language. The implication is that all human languages must, of necessity, have certain characteristics since all human languages are formed from and through human speech. There are evident applications of this implication in our search for linguistic universals. All speech surrogates, such as gesture, writing, print, are permeated with their spoken origins and an understanding of this is essential to an understanding of how our lives are affected by the surrogates and by the mass movement of the surrogates through mechanical or electronic means (Johnson, J., 1978; Ong, 1981). Practically the proposition states that speech determines the form of all culturally acquired languages and thus speech must be understood prior to our being able to fully understand language.

The fifth proposition, "The fusion of genetically determined speech with culturally acquired language produces a qualitatively new and uniquely human phenomenon termed spoken language," carries numerous implications for the role played by spoken language in the individual and in society. There is evidence that suggests that spoken language functions in at least three ways: in the linking of individuals with other humans, in the development of higher mental processes, and in the regulation of human behavior (by self as well as by others) (Dance, 1967; Dance & Larson, 1972; 1976). Spoken language is the content of human communication, not the sole content of all communication by humans, but the main content of that communication which is considered uniquely human. Spoken language, by joining signs and spoken symbols, frees the human individual and human society from previously mandated constraints of both time and space. The reason for the existence of human language may be argued to be primarily the enhancement of thought, mentation (Dance, 1978). Secondarily spoken language has a goal of infusing human interaction with thought. Communication can exist without spoken language, uniquely human communication must have speech and spoken language to exist. Applications of the fifth proposition would include: How do we regulate ourselves through the spoken word? How do we regulate others through the spoken word and its surrogates? What is

the impact of the functions upon studies of persuasion, of advertising, of organizational communication? How is the way we think affected by the way we speak? How may we use spoken language to achieve more satisfactory linkages with ourselves and with others? How can an organization best coordinate role demands with the functional preferences of personnel (Johnson, S. H., 1979)?

The sixth, and last, proposition of the speech theory of human communication as currently constituted, states that, "The fact that in its normal ontogenesis and development human language is spoken serves as a principal explanatory variable for the constitution and effects of specifically human communication." Each and all of the prior propositions has implications for and culminates in this summary proposition. In turn, this sixth proposition has implications for all instances in which spoken language, the content of human communication, is generated, used, and studied. To the degree that the theory is correct, to that degree the constitution, uses, and effects of human communication cannot be understood without taking into active consideration that in its origins human communication is necessarily spoken and that speech is necessary for the continuance of uniquely human communication. Thus this summary proposition has implications for any study of human communication and application in each instance in which human communication is patent.

The individual and society must be aware of and sensitive to the importance of speech and spoken language in the formation and development of individuals and of the society composed of those individuals. Practically speaking such awareness, and such sensitivity, calls for formal educational experiences throughout elementary, secondary, advanced, and continuing education.

All instances of human communication: with the individual, in families, schools, social organizations, local, national, and international governments, will be better understood and will be open to ever greater improvement for the individual and social good to the degree that the underlying import of the speech theory of human communication (insofar as that theory seems to be correct) is researched, understood, and practically applied.

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AN "ACT" BASED THEORY OF COMMUNICATION: FIRST PRINCIPLES

John H. Powers

As a communication theorist, my long-range goal is to construct communication theory in the "grand" tradition. Quite simply, I hope to develop a theory of human communication capable of applying, in precise and interesting detail, to such diverse areas of study as public speaking, discourse analysis, the oral interpretation of literature, rhetoric and composition as taught in Speech and English departments, argumentation, persuasion, group-problem solving, and even linguistics. Such is the goal and the dream of a lifetime.

But, whatever its grander intentions, a theory cannot *begin* with grandiose concepts and principles. To be useful *scientifically* the theory must instead begin with precisely thought out fundamental concepts, clear statements concerning the key relationships among those concepts, and detailed descriptions of the essential principles that will be employed in treating the discovered data. Armed with such a system of concepts and principles, the theorist may then lay down the general foundations upon which all subsequent, grander and more detailed observations are to be based. The final task is then to relentlessly follow those specific concepts and principles wherever they may lead along the path toward ever grander *systematic explanation*—because that approach seems the only real way to test the capacities of a proposed paradigm to see what its inner strengths and weaknesses may ultimately be.

What system of concepts shall we employ? I have chosen as the main conceptual tool in building the foundations for my own theory of communication the philosophical system developed by Susanne K. Langer in her work *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling* (1967, 1972). I believe that it, more than any other conceptual system with which I am familiar, has the power and precision needed to generate a theory of the magnitude I envision—and for which our discipline has so long sought. Therefore, all of my theoretical commitments on key intel-

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lectual issues in our discipline are being developed with Langer's philosophical constructs in mind. My purpose in this paper is (a) to outline some of the "first principles" of a theory of human communication which might be derived using the system of concepts developed in Langer's philosophy, and (b) to suggest some of the possible areas of immediate application that adopting the Langerian framework of concepts might make more theoretically accessible to us.

First Principles

1. *All organic processes take the form of "acts."*

The most fundamental concept for a theory of communication developed from Langer's philosophy is her concept of acts. Addressing the question of how one best describes organic processes in order to discover their *natural units* and *inherent dynamic characteristics,* Langer concludes that any organic process we choose to study—from the most microscopic (such as cell division or a neuron's discharge) to the most macroscopic (such as the wave of a hand or a person's life as a whole)—manifests a typical four phase "act" form composed of (a) the *impulse* (an initial building up of a *tension* or store of energy to be spent), (b) the *rise* or *development* (the progressive unfolding of the act along the lines foreshadowed and prepared for in the tensions built up in the impulse phase), (c) the *climax* or *consummation* (a turning point of maximum energy expenditure or activity arising from the original tension), and (d) the *cadence, fall,* or *resolution* (the decline of the act due to the exhaustion of the impulse's initial energy or tension, resulting in a return to relative quiescence). This general temporal form, said to underlie *all natural units* of *all organic processes,* Langer calls "the act concept." And it is from the dynamic characteristics of organic processes *as acts* which Langer derives all the secondary concepts and explanatory principles of her philosophy.

As a practical outcome, if one adopts Langer's claim that *all* units of organic processes exemplify the act form, then it is clear *a fortiori* that every specific process we study in Speech Communication must also exemplify the act form. That is, Langer's is an empirical claim that all processes exemplify the act form, so there should be no exceptions. Thus, for example, we should expect to find the act form exemplified in such diverse phenomena as sentence production, listening, delivering public speeches, attitude formation and change, greetings, good-byes, and entire conversations, language acquisition, reading of texts, story-telling and jokes, language change, turn-taking, slips of the tongue, group meetings, rumor cycles, argumentative encounters,

and even essay writing. These, and all the other processes we study, should exemplify the life cycle represented by the act form if Langer's philosophy is to provide a genuine paradigm for theorizing in Speech Communication. For, only if they do manifest the act form does it make sense to suppose that Langer's more detailed principles and theories, derived as they are from the formal nature of acts, might shed light on the true nature of the processes we study.

Is there any evidence then that the processes we study indeed do exemplify the act form? There is, and it comes to us from all directions, almost without searching, once we have the act form to serve as a focus in reading the literature. What follows is a small sampling of some of the places I have found the act form exemplified in communication related literature.

The pattern of *impulse, rise, climax,* and *fall* is clearly evident in drama theory, where it was perhaps first discovered and noted by Aristotle. In the *Poetics* (1450b 23ff.), Aristotle says of tragedy that it is "an imitation of an action that is complete in itself, as a whole of some magnitude. . . . Now a whole is that which has beginning, middle and end. . . . a well-constructed Plot, therefore, cannot either begin or end at any point one likes . . .". Subsequently he writes: "Every tragedy is in part Complication and in part Denouement. . . . By Complication I mean all from the beginning of the story to the point just before the change in the hero's fortunes; by Denouement, all from the beginning of the change to the end" (1455b 23-30). Here, in Aristotle, we have all the elements of the act form clearly described, with the tragedy having not only a clear beginning, middle, and end, but also rising action, a climax, and falling action.

Aristotle's analysis of the act-like elements of drama may also be found even today in books such as Dean and Carra's *Fundamentals of Play Directing* (1965), where they advise their students that "scenes that make up the rising action are minor climaxes" which build "until the major crisis is reached which propels actions directly to the main climax or obligatory scene. Out of this follows the denouement, resolution, or falling action to the end of the play, which is usually made up of diminished scenes" (p. 254). Once again the act pattern, and its vocabulary of rise, climax and fall can easily be seen in this treatment of play directing.

But the act pattern in literature is not limited to the genre of drama. In her book on *Poetic Closure* (1968), subtitled *A Study of How Poems End,* Barbara Herrnstein Smith generalizes the act pattern beyond drama, extending it to include all poetic forms (including non-narrative ones), writing: "The formula of introduction-complica-

tion-climax-resolution, most familiar to us in connection with dramatic structure, has its counterpart in any temporally organized work of art, from short story to sonata" (p. 35). The book subsequently analyzes the sense of poetic closure readers feel as being a function of the structure of the first three phases of the formula, arguing the thesis that "closure—the sense of finality, stability, and integrity—is an effect that depends entirely upon the reader's experience of the structure of the entire poem" (p. viii).

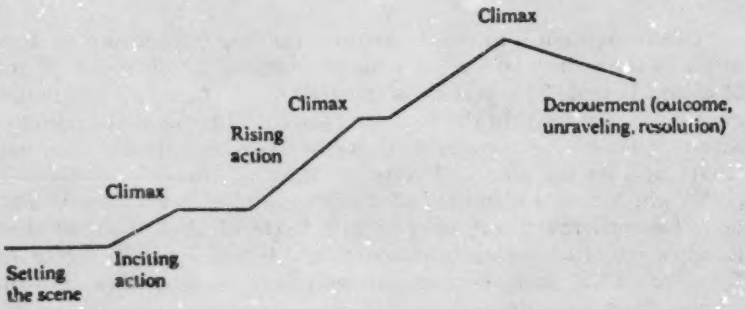
Smith's approach to poetic structure was forshadowed over thirty-five years earlier in Kenneth Burke's *Counter-Statement* (1931). For example, Burke's "Lexicon Rhetoricae" begins: "Form in literature is an arousing and fulfillment of desires" (p. 124). Trying to locate the effects of literature in inherent properties of the mind, Burke writes: "Over and over again in the history of art, different material has been arranged to embody the principle of the crescendo; and this must be so because we 'think' in a crescendo, because it parallels certain psychic and physical processes which are at the roots of our experience" (p. 45). If Langer's theory is correct, what is at the root of our "psychic and physical processes," the reason we resonate to materials arranged to embody the principle of crescendo, the basis of literature's ability to arouse expectations and to fulfill them, is the fundamental dynamic of all organic processes—impulse, rise, climax and fall.

Turning from examples drawn from literature theory, we can find the act form exemplified in the theory of rhetorical elements as well. In *English Prose Style,* Herbert Read, writing on the sentence as a unit of prose style, says (1952). "The sentence is a single cry. It is a unit of expression, and its various qualities—length, rhythm and structure—are determined by a right sense of this unity" (p. 33). Then, in words which ring of the act form, Read explains the structure of two mainstays of the rhetorical analysis of style, antithesis and periodic sentences: "Antithesis operates by a tension or suspension between two ideas; the sentence becomes a balance between equal but opposite forces. A similar kind of suspense is maintained in period proper. A period is a complex sentence of which the meaning remains in suspense until the completion of the sentence" (p. 42). In each case the first portion of the sentence builds a tension which is only resolved with the consummation by its required counterpart.

This same pattern of establishing an initial tension or impulse which builds to a climax that resolves the tension may also be observed in the rhetorical analysis of units much larger than the sentence. For example, in her book on *The Rhetorical Act,* Karlyn Kohrs Campbell describes one approach to organizing a speech (which she calls the

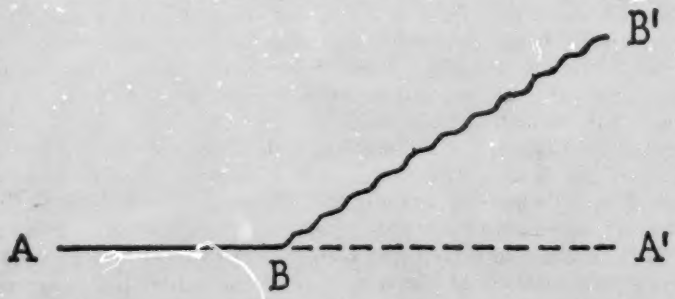
"dramatic narrative" technique) in terms reminiscent of the act form (1982, p. 227). Analyzing an example drawn from John Fowles' novel, *The Magus,* Campbell writes (p. 229):

> The story is an attempt to teach Nicholas about the nature of reality or truth as seen by his teacher. But the story cannot be reduced to an outline form. It is a nondiscursive or nonlogical structure, and it follows a different pattern of development. This pattern is followed by most stories, dramas, and jokes, and it looks something like this:



While Campbell limits this pattern to a single type of compositional construction, Robert Oliver, in *The Psychology of Persuasive Speech* (1957), recognizes that the pattern of impulse, rise, climax and fall must underlie all aspects of all persuasive composition. It is not simply the pattern of narrative, but of all spoken or written composition, if that composition is to seem to have any "life." Oliver writes:

> As all persuasive speeches are bound together by their similarity of goal, so are they all marked by certain common characteristics. One of those is *progression.* A persuasive speech moves; it is going somewhere. It fails if it is static. The speech follows very much the same kind of course as a short-story plot. It may be diagrammed as follows:



> The audience's thinking on the subject under discussion was progressing along the course A to A^1, but it was interrupted at the point marked B by the speaker's alternative proposal, much as the orderly course of the hero's life in a short story is deflected by the inciting incident. From that point there is a steadily rising action to the climax at B^1, when the speaker's proposal is mentally accepted by the audience. If the speaker continues to talk after that point is reached, the result is just as destructive to persuasion as it would be to literature if the author should go wandering on beyond his denouement. (p. 303)

The temptation is to simply continue quoting from area after area in which the units used for analyzing phenomena are defined in terms of action bounded by periods of relative quiescence, and the major descriptive terms within the unit are patterns of tension and release--Sarett and Foster on gestures in public speaking (1936); Brigance (1961), also on the phases of gestures; Mead's *Philosophy of the Act* (1938) which begins with the *impulse* phase and ends with *consummation;* Lacoursiere's theory of *The Life Cycle of Groups* (1980) and Knapp's stages of *Social Intercourse,* which run *From Greeting to Goodbye* (1978); and my own act-analysis of the structure of turn-taking, based on evidence from intonational patterns, gestural timing, and interactional synchrony studies (1981). But it is perhaps evident from this brief survey that many scholars in diverse fields have found it necessary and useful to employ in their own work descriptive vocabulary closely akin to that being systematically developed in Langer's philosophy. Having thus established at least some minimal presumption for continuing to develop communication theory within the Langerian paradigm, let me move on to describe several additional commitments entailed by the Langerian framework of concepts.

2. *Many explanatory principles may be derived directly from the act concept.*

The liklihood that there is a universal formal pattern underlying all organically based events is more than an interesting observation with no further systematic value. The universal pattern of impulse, development, climax, and fall provides Langer with the basis for deriving many powerful explanatory principles--principles which may be systematically applied in providing detailed accounts of specific features of the processes we study. That is, because the dynamic properties of acts themselves account for the general principles derived from them, and because the specific acts we study exemplify not only the act form but also these principles, the act concept may be used to generate explanations of the dynamics of the actual phenomena we

study. Since a detailed description of the key explanatory principles derivable from Langer's act concept is beyond the scope of this paper, readers interested in pursuing how these principles are stated and how they might be applied in reinterpreting specific data may want to read my discussion of conversational turn-taking (1981), my more general application of Langer's concepts in argumentation theory (1980), or my description of Langer's use of these principles to interpret the data on the origins of speech (1978).

3. ***The claim that "communication is a process" means that communication exemplifies the act form, and that it participates equally with all other organically based processes in manifesting the derivative explanatory principles.***

While this statement merely makes explicit the conclusions entailed in the previous discussion, there are two reasons for doing so. First, since there are many other descriptions of "process" in the literature (e.g., Berlo, 1960, 1977), and those descriptions lead to very different theoretical consequences from Langer's, it is very important to be as clear as possible about the propositions to which Langer's philosophy commits one. Langer's characterization of processes differs radically, for example, from Berlo's (1960) characterization of them as having no fixed beginnings and endings, or predictable orders of development. While there may be no precise boundaries, "impulse, rise, climax, and fall" is both orderly and predictable. Similarly, to say that communication is a process is clearly *not* to identify "communication" with "interaction." Interaction, in the sense, say, of a conversation, is a highly complex act (i.e., it exemplifies the act form) composed of numerous sub-acts—greetings, turn-taking, and closings; questions, exclamations, and assertions; sentences, clauses, phrases, words, syllables, phonemes, and hesitations; postures, gestures, facial expressions, and gaze; attraction, impression formation, and empathy—all of which manifest the characteristic act form, but only some of which fulfill the definition of an act of *communication* (see below).

In other words, communication is only one among numerous elements composing an interaction—all of which exemplify the act form. This observation leads to the second point I wish to emphasize. While communication as an act shares the act form and basic explanatory principles with all other organic processes, it is also *a special kind of human "activity" which differs significantly from all those other processes with which it shares the basic act form*—and accordingly, it will require an additional *special descriptive vocabulary* and *special set of additional principles* to describe it *as an activity* which differs

from other organic activities. There is no conflict between saying that communication is an act-structured process, and also saying that it differs fundamentally from other act-structured activities comprising an interaction. Communication *as an activity* is as different from paralinguistics and kinesics as it is from digestion and respiration—all of which play their role in implementing a conversation as a complex act-structured interaction. A theory of the communication portion of an interaction will, then, specifically be a theory of communication as *a particular type* of act-structured activity. Since, within the Langerian framework of terms, I am committed to a very narrow definition of communication as an activity, the next basic principle specifies the definition of communication as a human activity within which I work.

4. *Communication as a process is best defined as " 'the intentional transmission of ideas from one individual to one or more others.' If the intention miscarries, i.e., no idea 'goes across,' the individuals fail to communicate, though they may interact closely, elaborately, even violently"* (Langer, 1972, p. 201).

While the tendency over the past thirty years has been to subsume more and more widely diverse phenomena under the label "communication," and to consider them all "messages" or "message behavior," a theory of communication developed from Langer's philosophy would utterly reverse this trend. Communication is narrowly defined in Langer's philosophy, not because she feels that none of the other processes we study are important, but because it is hopelessly confusing to do otherwise—a little like calling everything in a pharmacy "medicine" and then mixing all the "medicines" indiscriminantly together regardless of their chemical structures, primary effects or after effects, just because they all have in common that they at one time or another "help people get well." Just because everything we do behaviorally has at one time or another "some effect" on someone else does not mean that those effects are all induced in the same way, or that everything that has an effect has the same "chemical" structure. Blushes, gaze, winks, gestures, and syntactically organized speech are all structurally differentiable activities and require separate labels to remind us that they also require separate theoretical accounts of their contributions to the development of conversational acts. To classify every component process which simply influences the course of an interaction as a "message," or to call it "communication," is to invite theoretical disaster. For classifying different things under a common label means, among other things, that the exact same theoretical statements should apply equally to all of them as a class. That this has not

happened in the course of the past thirty years suggests that the labelling of all behaviors as "messages" or "communication" has simply not served us well theoretically and should be abandoned.

Since a theory of communication acts should reveal not only how all instances of communication are similar among themselves, but also how, collectively, they differ from every other type of act, or from non-acts (e.g., clothing, space, etc.), influencing the course of a conversation, the next basic principle specifies what it means to "transmit" an idea.

5. *Communication is the process of projecting one's ideas into a transmissible and perceivable form—i.e., into syntactically structured speech, or its surrogates: writing, sign-language, etc.*

Central to understanding communication as a unique human activity is the concept of *logical projection* (Langer, 1967, p. 73ff). It is sometimes said that "meanings are not in words, they are in people." But a moment's reflection reveals that, until those meanings are projected outward from the person in some *perceptible* form, they are *only* in people. Those "meanings" are simply *not available* to others until they are put into a perceivable form (syntactically structured language) and projected outward from the body in speech or writing.

To communicate, then, is to perform the act of projecting one's ideas into a perceptible form for others to perceive and understand. The communicative act is unconsummated until someone else actually understands the idea that the communicator intended to project. If the communicatee does understand the idea which has been projected, then the joint act of communication has been consummated and comes to an end. If no proper understanding occurs, then the communication act remains unconsummated and no communication has occured.

Employing terminology developed in Langer's theory of art, Karlyn Campbell has recently written (1982) that "To communicate, to act rhetorically, means that you initiate an act that someone else can translate into virtual experience. . . . To communicate effectively means that the image or idea created in your mind approximates the image or idea that the speaker or author wished to convey" (p. 8). This is very much the process I have in mind when I speak of the logical projection of ideas from one individual to one or more others.

Communication is always *intentional* in the narrow but important sense that the communicator is trying to put inner ideas into a perceptible form that makes those ideas available for others (even a lie is an attempt to put *some* idea into a projectable form). That there may be *unintended consummations* (as, for example, when someone over-

hears a conversation, or reads a private or secret document), or that there may be *unintended effects* of one's act of transmission (e.g., one's remarks induce the communicatee to do some undesirable action), is simply irrelevant to the definition of communication as an act. The only definitionally significant criteria for the term "communication" are that an idea be projected into syntactically appropriate form (i.e., a form appropriate for *expressing* the idea), and that the idea has been perceived and understood by another. All the other components of a typical human interaction, as important as they are to the course of human affairs, do not involve the act of projecting ideas into a syntactically perceptible form and thereby are not properly labeled *communication* within the Langerian framework of terms.

6. *All other activities composing the complex act of conversation fail to operate on the principle of discursive logical projection and therefore require different theoretical explanations to account for their contributions to the phenomena of human interaction.*

Once again, this principle simply makes explicit what is implicit in the previous paragraphs. Human interaction is an incredibly complex activity whose many component processes must be teased apart with surgical precision and given their own theoretical explanations if we are ever to understand the "whole" which ultimately interests us. For an interaction is a whole in much the same way that a person is—composed of numerous clearly separable and differentiable processes (digestion, respiration, circulation, etc.; communication, empathy, suggestability, etc., respectively), each with its own internal dynamics and properties to be understood, each with its own specifiable relations to each of the other processes (digestion:circulation; communication: empathy), and each with its own characteristic relations to the person acting as a whole. And, just as different situations induce different patterns of relations among the various bodily processes (e.g., jogging increases circulatory and respiratory activity while decreasing digestive rates), so too do different situations induce different patterns of relations among the various component processes of an interaction (a lecture has a different percentage of communication acts, one presumes, than does a good-night kiss). It is in its potential for helping us tease apart all the component processes of interactions, and with conceptual precision rather than with impressionistic common sense, that the main virtue of Langer's conceptual system may ultimately reside. Thus, while the definition of communication is itself uncommonly narrow,

the grander synthetic vision such narrowing makes possible seems to me worth the price.

Conclusion

A brief summary of the central commitments of a new approach to developing communication theory cannot answer all the questions which must immediately come flooding to mind. Only future articles and further research can hope to answer those questions—each in its own turn, each depending for its solution upon preliminary theoretical decisions which become the premises for subsequent speculations. Theorizing is a systematic, and often, painfully slow process. So always, some questions must wait their turn.

What I have tried to do here is to present the most basic principles of the conceptual framework within which I presently work, and explain why I find that framework more promising than any other approach with which I am familiar. Human interaction, when we permit it to display its fullest array of component processes, is a *mysterium tremendum*. We are richly complex beings, and no amount of slicing and paring of that complexity can get all of human interaction to fit comfortably within such imprecise, global concepts as *message, sender, receiver,* and *feedback*. The profound advantage of Langer's conceptual system is that we need not try.

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WHAT WOULD A THEORY OF COMMUNICATION BE *FOR*?

Lee Thayer

What is a theory *for*?

The original Greek notion of theory was straightforward enough: If you wanted to write down a theory of something, you would locate a person who could do that something better than anyone else, and write down how that person did it.

But the later Greeks, out of their concern to distinguish the educated from the working classes, separated the head from the hand. We've been stuck with the consequences ever since. In common usage, according to a contemporary dictionary, that which is *theoretical* by definition lacks practical application. Thus, the "theoretical" *versus* the "applied," which is reflected in the motive inspiring this symposium.

Nor did Kurt Lewin's clever remark about the theoretical and the practical—"There is nothing so practical as a good theory"—change anything. There is the ageless story of the researcher who delivered himself of a 75-minute lecture on his own research, which, he argued convincingly, showed that lecturing is the *least* effective means of communicating knowledge to others.

As self-professed social or behavioral "scientists," we may bewail the fact that those who govern and those who rule do not take us and our "theories" more seriously. But is that what our "theories" are *for*?

> It is at least imaginable that the causes of social phenomena have nothing whatever to do with the cures of social ills—that is, that there is a radical disjunction between the explanatory devices by which we understand how things have come to be and the praxiological methods we employ to cure the social ills we face. (Brown & Lyman, 1978, p. 3)

It is more than imaginable. Given the separation of head and hand so immanent in western thought, it was inevitable.

Every major philosopher since Plato has addressed these issues in

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one form or another. They cannot be put to rest here, nor would it be appropriate even to attempt to do so.

Still, one's own "theory" of communication ought at least to acknowledge such issues, and to represent a conscious attempt to confront, in human terms, the question: What is this "theory" *for*? To be relevant, it has to be relevant to some human or social problem.

I

My own understanding—it would undoubtedly be pretentious to refer to it as a "theory"—of human communication has been richly informed by the insights of a number of scholars from many diverse disciplines (Thayer, 1972, 1977, 1978a, 1978b, 1979, 1980, 1981, in press). In terms of its human and social problem-solving potential, a shorthand way of putting that understanding is simply this: *As we communicate, so shall we be.*

What does this mean? And to what use can it be put?

Kenneth Burke was but one of a long list of thinkers and philosophers of language who taught us that "words have consequences." The names we give to things affect how we think about and behave toward those things. More than that: the shape and the form and the substance we give to the world outside of us in differentiating that world with our words constitutes the inner world—what we refer to as consciousness, as mind. Words have profound consequences for us in the sense that the world we *know* is the world in which we have to *be*. One is the reciprocal of the other, and both are built of words. We have trivialized human communication by reducing it to the notion of "information transfer." The primary function of language, as Nietzsche knew and as George Steiner has reminded us, is not for the purposes of "communication." Rather, the primary function of language is that of world-building. And, in giving life to the world in words (as Helen Keller so eloquently put it), we give conscious life to ourselves, but only that conscious life or existence which is enabled in the ways in which we do and do not speak of things.

This is one meaning of my shorthand expression, As we communicate, so shall we be.

Nor do we communicate only in words. Any way of objectifying the world—in prose or poetry, music or sculpture, in mathematical formulae or in jokes, in icons or in symbols, in "theories" or in folklore—is a way of creating subjective existence.

This seems to be as true for a people as for an individual. The pre-Hispanic Maya were perhaps the most war-like people known to us. In their expressions of preparations for battle, of the carnage of battle,

and of warrior worship, they have had no peer. Is it merely coincidental that they had but extremely limited ways of expressing peace—whether in words or in art or in ritual? Would it even be possible for a people who had no way of conceiving of war to be able to wage war?

Alternatively, how could one know that one had certain problems in one's marriage if one were incapable of expressing or of comprehending those certain problems?

Communication, then, is the process in which we create and maintain the "objective" world, and, in so doing, create and maintain the only human existences we can have. Whatever the nature of the self-awareness or consciousness or mindfulness we have as social beings, we have only in the ways in which we do and do not talk about ourselves and the world in which we live. It was this that Wittgenstein had in mind when he proposed that the limits of our languages are the limits of our worlds. The world in which we exist as *humans* is the world which for us is communicable—the world that one, or a people, is capable of expressing and of comprehending in some form.

Our assumption, given the nature of the biases of our Western *mentalité*, is that one first has a mind, and merely learns how to "express" it in words, or in communication; or that one first has feelings, and then merely learns how to "express" them to others, or to comprehend others' expression of "them"; or that one first somehow "knows" something, and then merely learns how to "communicate" that knowledge to others. This is not so. Minds and feelings and attitudes and thoughts are literally communicated into existence; and then they have only that existence which their communicability permits—enables or constrains. It is not that we communicate the way we do because we are the way we are; it is that we are the way we are because we communicate (or not) the way we do.

A communication "theory" which does not have this process set straight wil lnot be of much service to humankind—and will not, in fact, be very relevant to any real human or social problem.

These, then, are some of the issues behind the proposition, As we communicate, so shall we be. Of what use is it to understand, or to approach the study of, communication in this way?

II

It has a number of both theoretical and practical advantages.

Its primary theoretical advantage is that it moves away from a focus on what communication "is" to an "if . . . then" posture which has been so successful in the physical sciences. What we should want to know is what kinds of communication patterns have what kinds of

consequences, what ways of speaking of the world lead to what human or social problems, what ways of expressing and comprehending and explaining and accounting for the world lead to what kinds of human existence? What we should want to know is: if we are this way, how did we, communicatively, get to be this way?

Again, the assumption we make, given the nature of the biases of our Western *mentalité,* is, for example, that there are certain conditions external to us which "cause" us to be the way we are. If certain misfortunes befall someone, we are ready to justify that person's expression of being depressed by recounting those misfortunes. But a *communication* theory of human behavior would alert us first of all to the fact that one is not first depressed (which is psychological language and assumes that one *has* depression) and then merely expresses it, but that one can only "have" that "depressed feeling" if one is able to express it in a way which is communicable to others. And a *communication* theory of human behavior would secondly alert us to the fact that there are no self-evident external conditions—that everything outside of us which has human relevance has first to be named or interpreted by us. And, a *communication* theory of human behavior in alerting us to these two facts would alert us to the *practical* matter involved: if one wants to be depressed (or to have that "depressed feeling"), one needs to know how to take account of the world in certain meaningful ways, and how to express oneself in certain meaningful ways, and thus if one does not want to be depressed, one needs only to avoid taking account of the world in those particular ways, and to avoid expressing oneself in those particular ways. And thus does Lewin's pronouncement itself become valid.

This approach has another primary advantage: it forces the issue of what a theory is *for.* In this case, it forces the issue of how one, or how a people, *should be.*

It may seem on the face of it that this would render any social or behavioral "theory" unscientific. But quite the opposite is true. No communication theory which does not address itself to the issue of how people may be, or may *want* to be, has any scientific, let alone practical, value.

In the Prooemium to his *The Great Instauration,* Francis Bacon wrote,

> I would address one general admonition to all: that they consider what are the true ends of knowledge, and that they seek it not either for pleasure of the mind, or for contention, or for superiority to others . . . but for the benefit and use of life, and that they perfect and govern it in charity. . . .

Bacon is saying that a theory is not for the theorist, but for the use it may have to people in living their lives in some better or more desirable way. The end of the search for an understanding of communication, therefore, is one which illuminates the *relationship* between communication and human interests.

Just as physical hygiene and nutrition and good work bear upon organic health and the condition of the body, the kind of "communication metabolism" that characterizes an individual or a people bears upon that individual's or that people's psychological health and the condition of their human and social existence. As we communicate, so shall we be; the "theoretical" and the "practical" converge in this perspective.

III

In our obsession to scientize the study of communication, we have trivialized it; we have neglected what may be the key fact in the relationship between communication and human interests. It is that any theory of human communication is at once a theory of human nature.

"For what determines one's being human," Heschel wrote, "is the image one adopts. . . . Thus the truth of a theory about man is either creative or irrelevant, but never merely descriptive" (1965, p. 8). There is no "human" nature; whatever we may be, we are what we are as a consequence of having construed ourselves in one way or another in the context of *some* culture—which is to say, in the context of some broadly objectified and institutionalized way of talking about things.

In constructing social reality, we construct our own. Communication is not merely the instrument via which we express our nature; it is the process within which we have whatever nature we have. The question is not, therefore, how shall we fulfill our natures in communication? The question is, rather, how shall we understand the nature of our particular human-ness by looking at communication?

Ways of talking, or understanding—of communication—are ways of being. A change in ways of talking, of understanding—of communication—is a change in ways of being. The critical question about a nutritious substance or a poison is its effect on human life, not its chemical composition as such. One might know everything there is to know about the "process" of communication from an analytic or reductionist perspective, and still not know whether it was good for people.

What is there about our routine and ritualized ways of communicating—about our communication metabolisms—that is good for us,

and what is there about them that is bad for us? This is what we need to know. For, as we communicate, so shall we be.

IV

This approach is as applicable to the study of war and peace as it is to the study of love or of "mental" illness—which is nothing more than the consequence of a pathological communication metabolism—whether that of an individual or of a society.

But let us consider, to take but one very general example, the matter of "communicative competence." Especially by certain linguists, this is often understood as the capacity to generate most or all of the word-strings not *disallowed* by the logic of an underlying "grammar." One's knowledge of "generative grammar" may serve one's own ambitions; but how would it help a truckdriver to be a better truckdriver or a linguist to be a better human being? It seems altogether possible that one might know everything there is to know about linguistics, in this sense, and still not know what one needs to know about communication—or, for that matter, about communicative competence.

The way in which we define our terms belies our professed concern about the relevance of our "theories" and concepts to human interests. The test, in any case, is whether any definition contributes to our humanity—the theorist's or others'—or reduces our humanity in some way. There is no neutral ground where the continuous construction of human "nature" and its myriad artifacts in communication is concerned.

We become what we attend to. And the underlying theoretical (which is at once the underlying *practical*) question is this: What communicative competencies—what competencies for attending to the world—do I need to order to enrich and not to reduce my humanity?

What communicative competencies does one need in order to make this world a better place to live in?

What communicative competencies does one need in order to improve the quality of his or her life, or to improve the quality of life in the civilization which we all must share?

What communicative competencies does one need in order to optimize his or her chances for a healthy physical and emotional existence?

What communicative competencies does one need in order to be able to participate in the making of one's own destiny?

These are "big" questions. The "small" questions are no less pertinent:

What communicative competencies does one need in order to use

the mass media in some, on balance, humanizing way?

What communicative competencies does a teenager need these days in order to withstand the peer pressure involved in drug use, or in alcohol abuse, or in irresponsible sexual activity?

What communicative competencies do national leaders need these days in order to contribute to the well-being of the world in the next century?

What communicative competencies does a subordinate in a large corporation or government bureaucracy need in order to influence, in some positive way, the quality of his or her life at work?

What communicative competencies do lovers need in order to nurture their love after marriage?

What communicative competencies does one need in order to get where one wants, or needs, to be in one's life?

The list is obviously endless. But how much *have* our "theories" of communication contributed to the health or the well-being of people, or of our civilization?

V

No "theory" of communication which fails to acknowledge in some proactive way the vital relationship involved—that, as we communicate, so shall we be—can make such a contribution and, therefore, be of any *practical* value.

We have endeavored to make of communication a "scientific" study, or a study of mere instrumentalities. But communication is not just something that people do; it is that process in which we have our humanity—whatever and however that shall be. The human relevance of a theory of communication lies in what understandings it may help us to gain of the inextricable relationship between communication and human nature, of the consequences of how we communicate for the human condition. Anything less is not a theory of human communication, but merely reflects a "theory" of how to get on in the academic establishment.

There is an ancient Greek saying—that the steersman (from, whence, our contemporary fascination with the notions of cybernetics and the cybernated society) can take you from Athens to Crete, but he can't tell you whether or not you should go there. A communication theory that would enable people to determine whether or not they should go there would be a communication *theory;* all the rest is mere technics, the elevation of procedural busywork to a reason for being.

In the substitution of technics for living, we have, apparently, lost or otherwise misplaced the *meaning* of life. And where, but in our ways

of communicating, is that meaning to come from? And where is that communication theory that would enable us to understand *how* we need to go about, communicatively, reconstituting our lives?

Such are at once the practical, *and* the theoretical, questions.

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COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE: MODEL AND APPLICATION

Stephen W. Littlejohn and David M. Jabusch

Communication competence has been a major topic in the literature of our field during the past several years. In this paper we elaborate upon a recently developed model of competence that embodies many of the ideas expressed in this growing literature (Jabusch & Littlejohn, 1981, pp. 6-12). This is an important theoretical area to include in this symposium because of its highly pragmatic nature.

The model presented here is based on several assumptions: (a) communication is a transactional process in which people use messages to share meanings in particular contexts (Jabusch & Littlejohn, 1981, pp. 17-23); (b) meaning consists not only of referential dimensions, but emotional, attitudinal, and intentional factors as well (Jabusch & Littlejohn, pp. 65-73); (c) the degree of shared meaning can be accounted for by a variety of factors; (d) the communication competence of the participants in a transaction is one of the factors accounting for the success or failure of communication; (e) people vary in their communication competence; (f) people tend to be more competent in some settings than in others.

A Model of Communication Competence

We define communication competence as the ability and willingness of an individual to participate responsibly in a transaction in such a way as to maximize the outcome of shared meaning. We realize, of course, that other factors may limit the amount of shared meaning that may result from the exchange of messages, regardless of the competence of the participants. Several aspects of competence have been identified, but these can be integrated into four basic components—process understanding, interpersonal sensitivity, communication skills, and ethical responsibility. It is important to recognize from the beginning that these elements comprise an interdependent system. The elements are discussed below.

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1. *Process Understanding.*

This aspect of communication competence is defined as the cognitive ability to comprehend the elements and dynamics of a communication event. It is the degree to which a person understands what is going on in a communication transaction. Several propositions can be advanced in regard to process understanding: (a) Process understanding enables a person to reflect upon his or her own participation in communication transactions. Conville (1977) identifies transcendent reflection as an important goal of communication education. (b) Process understanding via reflection is largely a matter of identifying the rules of the system within which the transaction is occurring and comparing these with rules of other systems. As Pearce and Cronen (1980) explain, higher levels of competence enable a person not only to manage a system flexibly, but to choose the degree to which one will participate in the system. (c) Understanding leads to a wider repertoire of behavior and a greater degree of behavioral flexibility. Several writers such as Bochner and Kelly (1974), Wiemann (1978), and Allen and Wood (1978) have identified behavioral flexibility as an important element of competence. Backlund (1978) points out that competence is in part an ability to recognize socially appropriate behavior in a given situation.

2. *Interpersonal Sensitivity.*

This element is the ability to perceive accurately one's own internal feelings, the meanings and feelings of others, and the special demands of the communication situation. This element is closely aligned with rhetorical sensitivity (Hart, Carlson, & Eadie, 1980) and interaction involvement (Cegala, 1981). Sensitivity seems to be correlated with a number of variables: (a) Cognitive complexity seems to be a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for interpersonal sensitivity. People who have a higher degree of cognitive complexity have been found to be more sensitive to the differences among people and more able to adapt messages to others than are individuals who are cognitively simple (e.g., Delia & Clark, 1977; Delia, Clark, & Switzer, 1974; Hale, 1980). (b) Interpersonal sensitivity appears to correspond with empathic ability (Bochner & Kelly, 1974; Bochner & Yerby, 1977; Wiemann, 1977, 1978), social relaxation (Wiemann, 1977), interaction management (Wiemann, 1977), and appropriate response selection (Allen & Wood, 1978).

3. *Communication Skills.*

A communication skill is defined as an ability to use a particular

physical or conceptual operation or set of operations in a communication situation to achieve an objective. Skills permit what Allen and Wood (1978) refer to as "implementing . . . choices effectively through verbal and nonverbal means" (p. 289). Several examples of skills can be found among the nineteen competencies for high school graduates developed by the Speech Communication Association task force (Bassett, Wittington, & Staton-Spicer, 1978).

4. *Ethical Responsibility.*

The final element of our model is defined as an attitudinal set consisting of a concern for the well-being of all participants and a willingness to share the responsibility of the outcome of the transaction with other participants. Ethical responsibility is what Hart, Carlson, and Eadie (1980) call "interaction consciousness," or a balance between self interest and the interests of others. Although ethics is not normally considered to be an aspect of competence, we believe that including it helps to focus proper attention on how people behave in accordance with their values. Three generalizations are in order: (a) Ethical responsibility involves a predisposition to act in such a way as to achieve a positive outcome for others as well as for oneself. (b) It also involves a willingness to exchange information completely enough so that all participants can join in the responsibility for the outcome of the transaction (Nilsen, 1966). Finally, (c) situational factors apart from the ethical values of the participants sometimes dictate how a person acts toward self and others. The last point is important because it reminds us that one cannot always act in ways that are ethical in an absolute sense.

Applications

In this section we discuss applications in two parts. First, we deal with the relationship between experience and the development of competence. Second, we note some manifestations of the dimensions of competence in practical settings.

Development of Competence

Communication competence arises out of the interaction among three elements—theory, practice, and analysis. A theory is an abstract representation or explanation of events. It is verbal; that is, it can be expressed to others. Here we are referring not only to formal theory developed by scholars, but the educated guesswork of laypersons as well. Obviously, one of the most important outcomes of formal education is to help people develop notions of what is happening in and

around themselves, although people do not have to go to school to develop ideas about the nature of events. Nearly every adult has developed theories to explain communication events. It is widely believed by researchers of child development that children, as they mature, develop an increased ability to conceptualize relationships. The quality of an individual's theories has a direct bearing upon that person's competence.

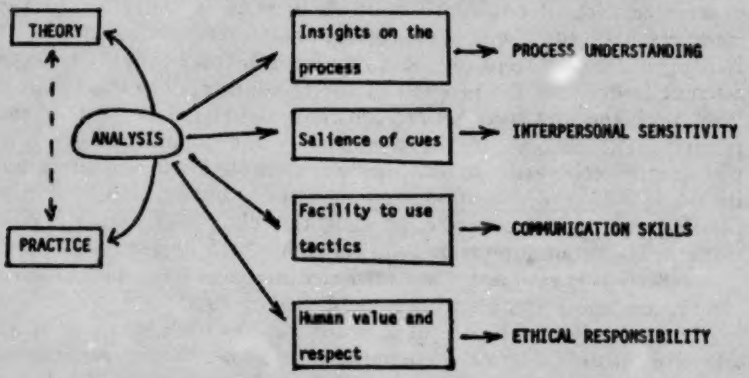
The second element contributing to the development of competence is practice. Everybody is a practicing communicator because every person constantly experiences communication. In certain educational settings such a schools, college courses, training programs, and workshops, practice is guided. Participants in such programs and educators who operate such programs aim to improve communication competency by structured practical activity.

We believe that theory and practice by themselves are essentially useless in developing competence. Theories which fail to incorporate contemporary data (either known or unknown to the theorist) are counter-productive, and practicing inferior or harmful technique only reinforces less competent communication practices. These elements must be linked via analysis. In normal human development, people play theory and practice against each other. One behaves (practices) in accord with the theory of the moment, and that theory is constantly re-evaluated and refined on the basis of experience. Analysis is a cognitive activity. It involves figuring out what is happening in one's environment and acting accordingly. Analysis is the key to increased communication competence.

When analysis leads to new insights into the process of communication, improved process understanding results. When analysis results in increased salience of interactional cues, interpersonal sensitivity is affected. Analysis that brings about more adept use of tactics affects communication skills, and increased sense of human value and respect brings about ethical responsibility. These relationships are illustrated in Figure 1.

The process of competence development is ongoing, involving a constant interplay between practice and theory. Communication education aims to accelerate the process, but the process will continue even in the absence of formal education. The degree to which competence will develop depends in part upon one's cognitive abilities and affective sensibilities, one's values in regard to the importance of communication, the variety and nature of one's communication experiences, and one's opportunities to be exposed to various theoretical perspectives on communication.

Figure 1
The Development of Communication Competence



Manifestations of Communication Competence

We will examine manifestations of each of the four elements of communication competence in four contexts—interpersonal, systemic, public, and mass. Interpersonal contexts involve face-to-face relationships among people in dyads and small groups. These contexts are marked by a relatively high level of spontaneous interaction and relational factors. Systemic contexts are broader than interpersonal, and they involve the linking of groups into larger organizational networks. The central element of the systemic level is information exchange, made possible by information storage and retrieval. Public communication is one-to-many communication. It involves a relatively fixed establishment of "speaker" or sender and "listener" or receiver roles. Mass communication involves the linking of groups or organizations with large publics. Messages on this level are generated by special organizations; they are filtered through media; and feedback is usually delayed. All four factors operate at each of these levels, but their relevance and application varies somewhat from context to context. The following discussion is designed to demonstrate some of the ways in which competence functions in the various contexts; it is not intended to provide a complete analysis.

Process Understanding

A high level of process understanding promotes a reflective attitude, or a willingness to think about one's own behavior, to evaluate

one's performance as a communicator. The reflective attitude contrasts with the "natural attitude" in which one proceeds through an experience without critical thought about what is going on. In the interpersonal context, one pauses before or after an event to assess what is happening. One steps out of a relationship from time to time to attempt to evaluate the progress of the relationship. On the systemic level, problems and successes are consciously analyzed in terms of the participant's "theory" of the moment. Public communicators who possess a reflective attitude consciously analyze the rhetorical situation, including self, audience, and context before, during, and after the public event. In the case of campaigns, this kind of reflection is continuous. Mass communication requires such a high degree of planning that reflection is essential. Most mediated messages have been heavily scrutinized before and after being published or aired.

The second consequence of a strong process understanding is an adaptive attitude. Here the communicator knows the importance of adjusting to conditions outside oneself. On the interpersonal level, one assesses behavioral options and makes conscious choices about how to act in a given relationship. In system contexts, communicators consciously consider personal and group information needs. Particular kinds of information are sought, and information sending is adjusted to individual and group differences. In public and mass settings, messages are adjusted to the audience and situation, and consumers are selective in their exposure to messages.

Interpersonal Sensitivity

First, heightened interpersonal sensitivity promotes attentiveness. In interpersonal contexts, this means that the individual watches carefully for environmental cues. The competent individual on this level is also attentive to interaction flow and aware of the need for appropriate interaction management, including such factors as turn taking. On the system level, communicators attend to cues related to information needs, being especially sensitive to signs from various parts of the system that indicate problems requiring organizational attention. An example of attentiveness in public contexts is the way in which many speakers watch for audience feedback cues during the transaction. In the mass context the producers are sensitive not only to the size and composition of audiences but also to the quality of the audience response to the content of the program or article.

Second, interpersonal sensitivity promotes a spirit of "transparency" (Jourard, 1968). On the interpersonal level, this involves not only being aware of cues from others, but understanding the meanings and

feelings behind those cues. Competent communicators use interaction to discover more accurately the meanings and feelings of others. They are also willing to self-disclose their own meanings and feelings in an appropriate fashion. Although transparency does not apply very well to systemic and mass settings, public communicators can and do possess such a spirit. It is seen in the willingness of many speakers to approach an audience as in an elevated conversation, speaking in a somewhat spontaneous, self-disclosive style.

Finally, interpersonal sensitivity involves self-monitoring. Here one attempts to be aware of certain internal states. In interpersonal communication, this involves being aware of and accounting for one's own feelings. On the systemic level, the individual monitors group problems in terms of information needs. Public speakers must not only be in touch with their feelings but through experience be able to control and use their "stage fright" to advantage. This aspect of interpersonal sensitivity is especially relevant to the consumption of mass communication. A competent media receiver attempts to be in touch with his or her own communication needs of the moment. At any given time a person may need to be isolated from media, to be entertained by media, to be informed by media, or to be challenged. Competent media receivers carefully select their exposure to media to meet their personal needs. At all levels, being aware of your own and others communication anxiety is useful to the competent communicator.

Communication Skills

Here we will separate skills into two types—initiating skills and consuming skills. The following list includes groups of initiating skills that often operate in communication: interpersonal—giving feedback, asking questions, answering questions, focusing on main ideas, adapting language; system—designing, implementing, and operating information systems, organizational writing; public—speaking skills; mass—media techniques (e.g., film editing), public writing skills, graphics.

Consuming skills are basically the same in all levels. They consist of listening skills, reading skills, and critical evaluation skills. The area of communication skills is both important and diverse, but it is beyond the scope of this paper to explicate specific skills. Many skills are specialized and particular to given settings; others are more general. It should be apparent by now that the possession of skills alone does not make a person a competent communicator.

Ethical Resopnsibility

We have already outlined two dimensions of ethical responsibility—

caring and openness. As we pointed out earlier, these are basically value dimensions. We will consider them separately, beginning with caring. On the interpersonal level, communicators are concerned that all participants benefit from the transaction. The interests of others as well as self are kept in mind. Participants aim for common as well as individual goals. In systemic contexts, participants attempt to maintain a "system perspective." That is, they understand the importance of maintaining and promoting the system as a whole rather than narrower group or individual goals. A system perspective is the antithesis of chauvanism. Ethical public and mass communicators seek information sharing instead of audience manipulation. The purpose of public communication is conceived in terms of audience benefits rather than personal gains. This dimension of ethics is very difficult in mass media today because of the highly commercial nature of media.

The second aspect of ethical responsibility is openness. This is the willingness to share responsibility. On the interpersonal level, ethical communicators take equal responsibility for the consequences of the transaction. On the system level, the quantity, quality, and timeliness of information sharing is considered important so that various units of the system can share in organizational problem solving. In public and mass communication, honesty and representativeness of data are necessary for allowing audiences to assume responsibility for the consequences of communication effects.

Conclusion

We have presented a model of communication competence and have shown how it can be applied to various contexts of communication. This model integrates much of the thinking on this subject in the recent literature. Our purpose here is to remove competence from the confines of the narrow conception of an individual's ability to achieve immediate objectives. We think it is far more fruitful to realize that communication competence involves a range of cognitive abilities, affective sensitivities, skills, and values. This broader conception allows for a fuller, more complete evaluation of individual involvement in communication transactions.

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COMMUNICATION PRAGMATISM: ANOTHER LEGACY OF GREGORY BATESON

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Most "theories" of communication (or anything else, for that matter) rely on some linear model to guide their application to practical achievements. Do this, the theory implies, and this result will accrue. We tend to look for theories which provide this direct application in the most straightforward causal terms possible. Consequently, we tend to reject out of hand those theories which cannot provide fundamental directives for how we ought to behave. The theory being presented here risks such rejection, for it contains within it no such linear model. In fact, it is quite the opposite.

Stephen Toulmin, in his review of *Mind and Nature* in *The New York Review of Books,* provides a virtual eulogy to Gregory Bateson, the intellectual forefather of this pragmatic view of communication. Bateson argued consistently for thinking about phenomena in evolutionary, rather than deterministic, terms. Toulmin (1980) writes of Bateson:

> Evolutionary ways of thinking, he argues, accustom one to the idea that true originality simply *cannot* be the outcome of straightforward planning or simple causality alone. Truly novel achievements can be recognized for what they are only after they appear. We then see that they have proved adaptive in ways that had not been "provided for beforehand," either conceptually, or causally. And the road to wisdom in the future must begin with the acceptance of that kind of unpredictability in historical events. . . . (pp. 39-40)

DEFINITION OF COMMUNICATION AND DOMAIN OF THE THEORY

Definitions are easy to come by. They explain everything and nothing. Understanding allows for a definition rather than results from one. Therefore, this definition is rather premature. Birdwhistell, cited in Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967), provides probably the best pragmatic definition of communication by emphasizing what communication is not:

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> An individual does not communicate; he engages in or becomes part of communication. He may move, or make noises . . . but he does not communicate. In a parallel fashion, he may see, he may hear, smell, taste, or feel—but he does not communicate. In other words, he does not originate communication; he participates in it. Communication as a system, then, is not to be understood on a simple model of action and reaction, however complexly stated. As a system, it is to be comprehended on the transactional level (p. 70).

Birdwhistell's holistic definition focuses on the application to the interpersonal or group level. As Bateson's work demonstrates, however, this view of communication can cover the domain of many cultural and even animal contexts. My interests dictate my focus on the applications of pragmatism to interpersonal/group settings with full awareness that someone else could easily expand the applications to include much larger social contexts, up to and including mass communication.

Propositions of Pragmatism

Earlier (1978) I have written of the pragmatic perspective of communication. Unfortunately I described the theory within the confines of a particular methodological application, a much too narrow view of the theory. The following propositions (or, more accurately, theoretical "assumptions") provide a more generalized account of this perspective, although they are hardly comprehensive.

1. *The human being is a social actor.*

A pragmatic view of communication does not deny or ignore the individual as a thinking, feeling, perceiving human being. However, in true Batesonian fashion, it focuses on the functioning human being, an actor who behaves socially with other actors and thus "engages in" or "becomes part" of the social reality that is communication.

2. *Humans* create *reality through enactment.*

Accustomed to physicalistic thought, we typically think of objects as "real." Thus, we adapt to the reality of those objects, which could be persons, of course. Pragmatism views reality as an act of creation through functional actions, not *a priori* to actions or assigned meanings. In this way, behaving is consequential. We *act toward* an object or person and thus create the "reality" of that object or person. In other words, we act *as though* it were real, and reality becomes created (i.e., enacted). Viewed this way, communication is less cognitive or perceptual than it is an externalized functional process. Scheflen (1974) emphasizes this distinction when he advocates "asking what behavior

means rather than asking people what they mean by their behavior" (p. 183).

3. *The locus of communication is the relationship created by interaction.*

Birdwhistell's definition highlights the transactional property of communication rather than the mere actions of individual communicators. The focus is on the connections between actors rather than actions without the context of other actions. One acts but, in so doing, does not communicate. Communication is located in the rules which bind the actions together in some meaningful and recognizable pattern. That is, communication is a matter of *form* as well as function. But the form of interaction, the patterns or connectedness, is not a matter of simple cognition or perception. Rather, actions are punctuated (i.e., organized) into *inter*action by rules created through being socially enacted during the historical process of the communication. The focus remains consistently on evolutionary processes.

Communication comprises a series of interconnected events which enact a "reality" created by the interconnectedness, that is, can be meaningfully organized or punctuated into an interpretable sequence. Communication thus involves each participant's placing certain inherent obligations on the other's choice of response (and choice to respond) and being obligated to respond "meaningfully" to the other's actions. The consequence of those obligations is a social relationship, a single entity, created by the individual participants and serving to define, in part, the individual participants.

4. *The maintenance of a relationship requires re-enactment.*

When one understands communication as an event, comprising punctuated sequences of events, the evolutionary process of communication becomes paramount. Evolution is never static but is perpetually in a state of change. Being is transient; becoming is constant. Thus, evolution does not lead to some end state in the sense of an unchanging finality. A goal is not something to achieve in the sense of a future object to be gained. Rather, a goal is enacted. Retaining the goal requires re-enacting that goal. A cliche of system theory, within which the pragmatic view of communication is developed, is that nothing is so constant as change; the more a thing changes, the more it stays the same. To remain viable, then, a relationship must continue to change. To remain the same, the more the relationship must re-enact social routines which reflect the state of that relationship.

5. *Meanings are interpreted, not assigned.*

When one shifts the focus of communication from the perceiving actor to the social reality of interaction, the concepts associated with the individual's cognitive capacity also shift. We typically consider meaning as a rather static predetermined phenomenon. The perceiving human, because of past experiences with similar contexts, is able to assign meaning to an object. In other words, the individual carries within him/her a repertoire of meanings from one context to another and applies the appropriate one(s) to the appropriate situation. But if one retains the evolutionary way of thinking and keeps in mind the nature of communicative phenomena as events, then to think of meanings as assigned by individuals according to appropriate cues seems somehow unsatisfying.

An object may have an assignable meaning for individual perceivers, but events require interpretation *after* they have occurred. And an interpretation of an event is possible only in the context of other events. Thus, we "make sense" of events only from the view of hindsight. After events occur, we interpret their meaning in the light of how and why they came to pass. Interpreted meaning of events is thus a function of retrospective sense making.

Applications and Implications of Pragmatism to Communication Practice

This special issue of *JACR* is performing a real service to its readers. Too often we tend to dichotomize theory and practice. We forget (or, perhaps, never knew) that the practical value of experience is virtually useless without some theoretical understanding and explanation of that experience. Conversely, any theory is valuable only insofar that it can be applied fruitfully. Theory and practice should and inevitably do go hand in hand. To encourage practice without a comprehensive theoretical understanding is to engage in practice which is haphazard, disjointed, and ultimately not very useful. One does not practice anything without some theory, although the theory may be only implicit. This issue of *JACR* encourages the proper conjunction of theory and practice: make the theory explicit, and let it guide practice.

1. *Communication is a basic skill—the fourth "R," relating.*

For centuries social and biological scientists have attempted to explain what separates humans from the rest of the animal kingdom. Some anthropologists have speculated it was the human capacity for symbolic understanding, the possession of a language. Some biologists

have suggested the size or configuration of the human brain or having a thumb which allows for objects to be grasped. Some psychologists have indicated that only humans have the deep capacity for beliefs, feelings, and emotions. Pragmatism would imply that the essence of humanness is more than any of these other explanations; it is the complexity of social relationships in which humans engage and develop.

Humans relate with other humans in a variety of ways, and develop relationships that involve a variety of social functions from acquaintanceship to sexual partners to close friendships. Whereas other animals have the capacity to relate to other members of their species, only human relationships cover such a broad complexity of forms and functions. This is the essence of communication—the ability and capacity to enact and thereby create relationships of such varying complexity. As such, communication may be the most fundamental of all basic skills, far surpassing the ability to read or write a language or invent a sophisticated symbolic system.

Moreover, humans use this skill daily, and haphazardly, virtually without any regard for their tremendously sophisticated ability. We have learned communication without being aware of having learned. We develop relationships with other human beings from the earliest stage of infancy and without attempting to understand how and why. In short, we take for granted this most basic ability and even avoid attempting to understand it, often preferring instead to think of communication as a manipulative power to wield over others—from how to sell refrigerators to eskimos to how to pick up girls. But communication, pragmatically, is not possessed by a single individual to do with as he/she wills; it is a capacity for relationship, a skill of enacting a social reality with other humans. If communication is tantamount to relationship (form), then communicative skill is adapting to and relating with others (function). One understands that skill (function) by placing it in the context of the relationship (the form).

2. *Communicative competence is a relational, rather than an individual, skill.*

We have traditionally thought of the competent communicator as one who possessed the ability to construct "ideal" messages or present an "ideal" delivery (in the elocutionary sense). More recently communicative competence has been conceived as interpersonal in the sense that a "communicator can be judged as competent if he is able to maintain social relationships *over time* that are mutually satisfactory for all concerned" (Wiemann, 1977, p. 196). Unfortunately the typical

view of communicative competence is the focus on judging a communicator's competence in terms of what specific behaviors he/she employs and how competent other communicators judge him/her. The value of putting a theory to practice, however, relies on discovering not only *what* to look for but *where* to look for it as well.

One does not communicate competently; one engages in or becomes part of communication which is competent. Furthermore, a particular communicator may be very competent in one relationship but incompetent in another. Of course, such a statement is absurdly untraditional. It means simply that to say one communicates competently is to say that one relates competently. Competent relating is not simply showing empathy or attempting to "manage" the interaction, but adapting to the other person(s) and, more importantly, to the relational situation and the developmental stage of the relationship. Such adaptation may, in one case, involve a display of affiliation/support and, in another, a display of domineering or submitting behavior. No particular behavior can be said to be a display of communicative competence (or incompetence) in all situations and all relationships (or even in the same relationship at different times).

And competence is not necessarily the other's perception of competence. A mutually satisfactory relationship may involve the perception of one (or both) partner in the relationship that the other is rather incompetent, but the relationship is mutually satisfactory despite (or even, occasionally, because of) that perceived incompetence. Any avid television viewer recalls that Columbo, the master detective, made apparent communicative incompetence into a virtue—in actuality, a highly competent interrogative style.

Indeed, relational style may be more appropriate to competence than behavioral displays or individual perceptions. The truly competent communicator is probably one who engages in numerous mutually satisfactory relationships, representing a variety of forms, and who possesses a wide variety of styles which he/she uses in relating and adapting to the complexity of those relationships taken together. Perhaps complexity (many different types) of styles and the sensitivity to display those styles appropriately in a variety of situations or relational stages with a variety of different people is a better indicator of communicative competence than any other. The competent communicator is thus a complex communicator.

3. *Effective communicators adapt to (and, coincidentally, create) rules of interaction.*

If adaptation is the key to relational competence, then of para-

mount importance to practical application of the pragmatic view is knowing to what one learns to adapt. Traditionally, we think of adapting to the other person(s) in the communicative context, but we miss the point of *inter*action if we interpret such advice too literally. Recall that communication is created *between* people and serves to bind them together within some social entity called a relationship. The relational system, then, is the source of communicative effectiveness. And the system is formed by the creation of and adaptation to rules to which participants conform when engaging in effective communication. To adapt to the other person is to adapt to the other person *as defined by that interactional system* and the rules of interaction.

But what are communication rules? Pearce and his associates (see, e.g., Pearce, Harris, & Cronen, 1981) have devised a provocative rules-based theory of communication, but the present discussion of rules should not be confused with their formulation which locates rules within the head of each social actor and often takes the form of means-goal judgments of appropriate behaviors. The pragmatic view of rules is more closely aligned with Jackson's (1977) view which located a rule within the interaction patterning of the relationship. Discussing the family as a "rule-governed system," Jackson remarked:

> Although the family-as-a-unit indulges in uncountable numbers of different specific behaviors, the whole system can be run by a relatively small set of rules governing relationships. . . .
>
> We say a rule is a "format of regularity imposed upon a complicated process by the investigator," thereby preserving the distinction between theoretical term and object of nature. . . . A rule is, but for our paucity of expression, a formula for a relationship (p. 11).

An interesting facet of rules, viewed as formulas for relationships, is the fact that they typically do not exist prior to the relationship. To be sure, the larger culture has prescribed certain socially acceptable rules for engaging in "polite conversation." We all know how to behave when meeting a new acquaintance. That is to say, we know how to adapt to relational rules in certain situations, particularly initial stages of interaction. However, as interaction continues, new rules are created (more accurately, are enacted) by and during the interaction itself.

Effective communication involves recognizing those rules that are enacted (through redundancy or recurrence of patterns) and adapt to them. Unlike the rules of chess or basketball, relational rules do not so much govern how the game of relationship (communication) is played, but enable us to play the game. As we continue playing the game (i.e., interacting), we are engaged in enacting (making up) new

rules. We cannot avoid doing so. Effectiveness involves playing the game by the rules, and effectiveness requires being rhetorically sensitive to the rules which are enacted and adapting to them.

Of course, adaptation requires immediate retrospective sensemaking of the ongoing interaction and, consequently, behaving according to those rules. Jackson (1977) identified a typical rule for marital couples: the *quid pro quo* (essentially, something for something). That same rule may typify a vast spectrum of other relationships. But every relationship is, to some extent, unique—which means simply that each relationship has enacted certain rules idiosyncratic to that relationship serving to identify that relationship.

4. *Relationships take time (and a lot of work) to develop.*

When one begins to think in evolutionary terms, one begins to think in terms of time. Such a mode of thinking is foreign to most of us, at least those of us immersed in the culture of Western civilization. We have long revered the value of critical and analytical thinking, structural and spatial conceptualizations; but we find time-based thinking quite difficult. But communication, viewed as relationship is evolutionary, time-based. Relationships develop, create, deteriorate, progress, regress, maintain, ebb, and flow—and are often influenced as much by accidental variations as by motivations.

So how does one improve communicative (relational) skills? Most of us are aware, though not at a high level of consciousness, how to communicate during the initial stages of relational development. We have learned, at varying levels of ability, how to do small talk, for instance. And small talk is quite valuable groundwork for enacting rules of interaction. This period provides topics and a direction for interaction, thereby allowing interactional rules to be enacted. We are probably only slightly less aware of how communication gets done at the termination stage. Despite Paul Simon's advice on "50 Ways to Leave Your Lover," the more frequently employed termination strategy is just avoidance of further interaction.

The most difficult period of communication (relationship) is probably that of maintenance. The they-lived-happily-ever-after endings of fairy tales and romantic fantasies are just that—fantasies and fairy tales—for most of us. Maintaining a happy marriage or a close friendship is more than achieving a goal and relaxing because the goal has been achieved. To the contrary, maintaining a level of relationship requires re-enacting the rules that brought the relationship to that stage in the first place. And re-enactment requires retrospection, looking backward, and understanding the history of the interaction.

Alan Alda (1981), who is probably as good a communication/relationship therapist as anyone, recently remarked, "I just know there's a mysterious moment when you realize that you want to be close to someone, whatever it takes. . . . With some of my friends, it's been verbalized along the way. With others, we noted the closeness only after it's happened" (p. 48). In either case, maintaining a relationship requires some backward-looking realization and analysis of what has come to pass. Understanding the history of the relationship, the enacted rules of interaction, allows for keeping the relationship at a mutually satisfactory level.

This discussion should not be interpreted as implying that all, or even most, of interaction conforms to certain rules. To the contrary, as Jackson (1977) suggested, relationships enact "uncountable numbers of different specific behaviors," yet runs on a "relatively small set of rules." Indeed, much of the interaction of maintenance may not appear to conform to the rules of friendship or intimacy. But certain rules (and periods of interaction) will include re-enacting those rules and thus serve to maintain the relational level.

A recently completed research project (Fisher & Drecksel, 1982) suggests that relational maintenance is not characterized by a static period of interaction which conforms to consistent rules. Rather, a characteristic of relational maintenance was a two-phase (representing quite different interactional rules) cycle which repeated itself perhaps indefinitely. Friends do not maintain their relationship by doing the same things over and over; they run in place, cycling in and out of friendship patterns. Alan Alda (1981) said much the same thing about romantic love in a marriage:

> When the romantic love goes, people shouldn't panic because it comes back. In waves or cycles. Like a fever. You can be married to a person for ages; months go by when you feel hatred, crankiness, impatience. Then when you least expect it, a wave of romantic puppy love for your mate knocks you over. (p. 47)

Perhaps the best advice for functioning in a developing relationship is, in adolescent jargon, to "go with the flow." Let the relationship develop as it will and at the rate it will. But maintaining a relationship, if maintenance is desired, requires work, hard work. Remember that a relationship never *is;* it is perpetually *becoming.* Maintenance requires looking backward from that "mysterious moment." It requires understanding what interaction rules brought you to that moment and cycling back to those rules at various times during future interaction. And maybe other moments will occur, and other retrospective under-

standings will occur when the realization dawns that new rules have been created and that the friendship, though still close, has changed to conform to new rules. To a large extent Alda's movie, *The Four Seasons,* involves four stages of relational maintenance, but the rules change during each season. The key to effective communication remains looking backward, retrospective understanding, and working hard at maintaining a "good" relationship.

5. *Communication pathologies are social abnormalities .*

The most prevalent application of the pragmatic view to communication is probably in the area of therapy. The therapists at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California, have been applying their "interactional view" to therapeutic treatment for some time. They advocate treatment of a schizophrenic (or other pathological individuals) within the context of an interacting social system (typically, the family). Their emphasis on interaction *between* people symbolizes a rejection of psychoanalysis and the Freudian locus of pathology *within* the individual's internalized past experiences. Their interactional view led, for example, to the discovery of the "double bind" as a potential theory of schizophrenia (see Bateson, Jackson, Haley, & Weakland, 1956).

The central term in this proposition is "social." A communicator does not have a "problem" except within a social system, a relationship. The therapist then suggests that pathologies are recognizable only because they do not conform to what is "normal" behavior within the social system or culture. And what is an abnormality but the failure to conform to existing and enacted rules?

If therapists have learned that pathological communication has social origins for diagnosis and treatment, then communication pedagogy should be able to take advantage of this same knowledge. Most of our classroom training in communication skills centers on a single type of relationship: control. We emphasize teaching students how to control other people or resist the control of others. We teach public speaking for persuasive purposes. We teach how to analyze audiences in order to appeal, adapt to them, to control them. We teach how to judge people rather than how to accept them. We teach group discussion as how to control the task situation in order to make the best possible decision. We teach group leadership as a means of controlling the group members and the problem-solving agenda.

Now I find no fault with including control situations within the curriculum of communication skills training. But I do find it incongruous that our curriculum emphasizes such situations at the ex-

pense of others. Certainly most communication—the everyday conversations and talk with friends and acquaintances—does not involve situations in which control is a typical characteristic. In fact, control is only one kind of relationship and is a matter of the communicators' choice to define the relationship as one of control. The more serious problem is the absence of evolutionary thinking that leads to our choice to design courses oriented to teaching communication as a control device and making judgments of people implicitly to gain some control over them. This view of communication skills stems from locating communication within the individual rather than in a relationship and defining relationships in terms of the individual participants (a linear theoretical model). It is a perfectly acceptable way to view communication, of course, but we should be aware that it is only *a* way to view communication and certainly not the only way.

Summary

Most readers of "applied" theories will find my approach to theoretical applications quite unsatisfying. Most of us look for answers, for directions on how to guide our behavior. We already have the questions. My approach has been to apply communication theory not as a panacea for solving problems, but as a different way to view the problem so that new directions and areas for finding answers are created. If the application of this theory of communication could be reduced to a single statement, it would probably be, "Adopt the evolutionary way of thinking about communication in terms of events and wholes." Communication then becomes relationship; understanding then becomes retrospective. With this pragmatic view, then, the questions (new and different) asked become more significant than any answers that might be obtained. With this pragmatic view, we may not "know" any more about communication, but we will certainly "understand" it in a different (and, who knows, perhaps even "better") way.

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THE SYMBOLIC CONVERGENCE THEORY OF COMMUNICATION: APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND CONSULTANTS

Ernest G. Bormann

This paper presents the basic structure, defines the key terms, and indicates the usefulness of the symbolic convergence theory of communication for teachers and consultants.

The paper begins with a definition of communication as it relates to the theory and specifies the limits and scope of symbolic convergence. The next section elaborates the basic postulates and concepts of the theory and sketches how the theory explains and anticipates communication behavior. The final section describes the implications and applications of symbolic convergence theory to practical communication situations.

Definition of Communication in Symbolic Convergence Terms

Communication refers to the human social processes by which human beings create, raise, and sustain consciousness. These processes are symbolic and shared. A public consciousness is the *sine qua non* of culture. *Culture* in the communicative context means the sum total of ways of living, organizing, and communing built up in a group of human beings and transmitted to newcomers by means of verbal and nonverbal communication. The culture consists of shared norms, reminiscences, stories, rites, and rituals which provide the members with a unique symbolic common ground. Communication is a necessary but not sufficient condition for culture. Other things are required such as material goods, artifacts, tools, and technology, but without communication these components could not result in a culture.

Symbolic Convergence Theory

Symbolic convergence is a general theory (Bormann, 1980) which

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provides a universal explanation of human communication. The structure of the symbolic convergence theory is more analagous to that of Darwinian evolution than it is to any of the hypothetico-deductive systems that are common to physics and chemistry.

Symbolic convergence provides a description of the dynamic tendencies within systems of social interaction that cause communicative practices and forms to evolve. Symbolic convergence allows theoreticians and practitioners to anticipate what will happen and explain what has happened, but it does not allow for predication and control of human communication.

Symbolic convergence creates, maintains, and allows people to achieve empathic communion as well as a "meeting of the minds." It is symbolic because it deals with the human tendency to interpret signs and objects and give them meaning. This human tendency also carries over into the interpretation of the things people say and do. People tend to make human motion into symbolic action (that is, they tend to attribute meaning to it) by trying to figure out why the actors did what they did and what the action symbolizes. What is sometimes called "attribution theory" relates to this aspect of symbolic convergence (Berger, 1973; Insko & Schopler, 1972.)

Convergence refers to the way, during certain processes of communication, two or more private symbolic worlds incline towards each other, come more closely together, or even overlap. If several or many people develop portions of their private symbolic worlds which overlap as a result of symbolic convergence, they have the basis for communicating with one another to create community, to discuss their common experiences, and to achieve mutual understanding. But symbolic convergence means more than an intellectual coorientation in which people come to have the same logical and rational interpretation of symbols. Symbolic convergence also explains how people come to have an emotional investment and commitment to the symbols they live by—how it is that people can sympathize, empathize, and identify with one another.

Investigations by Bales (1970) and Bormann (1975) revealed that the basic communicative process by which people experience symbolic convergence is the *dynamic process of sharing group fantasies.* The moments when communicators are caught up in the sympathetic participation of a common drama are *fantasy chains.* The result of such symbolic sharing is a social reality common to the participants which explains their experience in terms of narrative accounts, analogies, metaphors, irony, and word play. The fossilized remains of shared

group fantasies can be found in texts of oral or written messages in the form of *fantasy themes* or *fantasy types.*

A *fantasy theme* consists of a dramatizing message in which characters enact an incident or a series of incidents in a setting somewhere other than the here-and-now of the people involved in the communication episode. Fantasy themes are often narratives about living people or historic personages or about an envisioned future. The term *fantasy* in the symbolic convergence theory is a technical term and should not be confused with another common usage of the term which is of something imaginary, not grounded in reality.Quite to the contrary, *fantasy* within this theory is the way that communities of people create their social reality, and employs a meaning much closer to another common usage of the term: the imaginative and creative interpretation of events that fulfills a psychological or rhetorical need. The Greek root is *phantastikós* which means to be able to present or show to the mind, to make visible. A fantasy theme is a way for people to present or show to the group mind, to make visible (understandable) a common experience and shape it into social knowledge. The technical use of the term *fantasy* is very similar to individual fantasy and day-dreaming. Individual fantasy is central to problem-solving, creativity, and motivation. Much individual fantasizing deals with nonfictitious materials (Klinger, 1971). Many group fantasy themes are also about experiences in the past or envisioned in the future.

Once the dynamic process of sharing a group fantasy creates symbolic convergence for a group of people, they will exhibit the "inside joke" syndrome. The *inside joke* is a communication incident in which a speaker alludes to a previously shared fantasy with a nonverbal signal or sign or verbal code word, slogan, label, name of hero or villain, or story summary. This brief and cryptic (to outsiders) message sparks a response appropriate in mood and tone to the original sharing response when group members first created the consciousness associated with the fantasy. The inside-joke phenomenon makes possible the development of *fantasy types.*

A *fantasy type* is a recurring script in the culture of a group. Often groups of people will tell a variety of stories, similar in theme and action. They will essentially be the same narrative frame but with different characters and slightly different incidents. As members of a group develop their culture, they begin to use the device of fantasy types as a shorthand way to tap old meanings and verities, to arouse shared emotions and motives, and to interpret new experiences in terms of old scripts.

A *rhetorical vision* (Bormann, 1972) is a unified putting-together

of various shared scripts which provides a broader view of a culture's social reality. The rhetorical vision is often integrated by a master analogy that pulls the various elements together. Usually a rhetorical vision is indexed by a slogan or label.

A *rhetorical community* consists of the people who participate in a rhetorical vision. Members of a rhetorical community share "inside jokes" and will tend to respond to messages in ways that are in tune with their rhetorical vision.

A *saga* is a detailed narrative of the achievement and events in the life of a person, a group, a community, an organization, or a nation. For example, the common symbolic ties that bind the participants to a formal organization and provide the symbolic aspects of the organizational culture and customs are furnished by the saga. To function, the saga, like the fantasy, must be shared. The concept *saga* is useful to the practitioner making a communication audit of an organization, for example, because the members of the formal organization may participate in several rhetorical visions, some of which are antagonistic (Bormann, Howell, Nichols, & Shapiro, 1982.) Unless all or most members share some fantasies in common, i.e., unless they have an organizational saga, both the members' commitment to the organization and their ability to create a cooperative communicative climate will be slight. Likewise, unless there is a national saga to which most or all citizens are committed, the practitioner who tries to analyze the culture of the United States, Japan, Russia, or any nation state, and estimate its relationship to intercultural communication, will be investigating a meaningless question.

How Symbolic Convergence Works

Fantasy themes, in contrast to human experience, are organized and artistic. When speakers select certain personae to be part of the fantasy theme, they begin to shape and organize experience. When they select a scene and incidents and place these incidents into a sequence, when they attribut motives to the personae, they interpret, slant, and organize their portrayal of what happened. Because fantasy themes are always slanted, ordered, and interpreted, they provide a rhetorical means for people to account for and explain the same experiences or the same events in different ways. These interpretations may vary from slightly altered accounts and subtle variations on one end of the continuum to diametrically opposed interpretations at the other. The most extreme cases of varying interpretations are mirror-image fantasies in which the heroes of one account are the villains of the other, the

laudable actions in one becoming the deplorable actions in the other, and so forth.

As people create a consciousness and form a rhetorical community, their vision with its sacred fantasy themes and types becomes an important factor in their sharing new fantasies to explain unfolding events. They find it difficult to interpret an event in which one of their sacred heroes is a participant in terms that cast that persona as a villain. They often seek to fit the new event into a fantasy type. ("This is just another example of the Republicans helping the fat cats with their trickle down theory at the expense of the common people and the poor." "This is just another example of Democrats being soft on communism.")

We seldom understand events in all their complexity; in order to understand them we often have to see them acted out by actors. The power of the symbolic convergence theory stems from the human tendency to try to understand events in terms of people, preferably one protagonist making decisions, taking actions, getting results. We can understand a person making plans, seeking goals, and succeeding or failing because we often interpret our own behavior in that way in our personal fantasies. Interpreting events in terms of human action allows us to assign responsibility, to praise or blame, to arouse and propitiate guilt, to hate, and to love. When we share a dramatization of an event, we make sense out of what prior to that time may well have been a confusing state of affairs. Uncertainty and confusion generate group fantasy. By creating a script that accounts for what happened, we deal with uncertainty in a psychologically satisfying way. Thus the definition of fantasy as a creative and imaginative interpretation of events to fulfill a psychological need comes about because the basic axiom of the theory posits an innate human need to understand experience in terms of human action, not only in individual fantasy but in social fantasies, which bring people into communion with others.

Applications and Implications of Symbolic Convergence Theory for the Practice of Communication

Diagnosing communication malfunction

One important application of the symbolic convergence theory for teachers and consultants of communication is its use in improving two-person, family, and small group communication. Just as Darwin's theory explains the observable facts of evolution in terms of such processes as natural and sexual selection, symbolic convergence theory explains the sharing of group fantasies by several different social

processes. The basic question is, "Why do some fantasy themes spark a chain of participation and sharing while others fall flat?" Bales (1970) described a psychoanalytic social process which provides a partial answer. He noted that the fantasy theme that chains in a small group is often a mirror of the group's here-and-now internal and external problems. Because of their common fate as part of the group, members have common experiences that predispose them to share fantasies which relate symbolically to their concerns.

Participants in a group facing a touchy common problem are likely to take flight from open discussion. The repressed problem then tends to surface in symbolic form as a fantasy chain. Issues of power, sexism, social attraction, role conflict, social rejection often are deeply disturbing. Members find the direct confrontation of such issues painful and unsettling.

Freud (1938) argued that when individuals repressed needs or problems into the unconscious, the issues often surfaced in distorted symbolic terms in their dreams. A trained person could use dream analysis to discover the repressed problem. Freud used the analogy of a community under censorship which repressed the open discussion of pressing problems. Under such circumstances the people often express their criticism of the repressive government and their common problems in the forms of such fantasy themes as jokes, parables, and fables. The censors would find it difficult to repress such materials because their manifest content is not closely and clearly related to the situation. Still, those who share the fantasies know the moral of the stories.

In much the same way, investigators (Bormann, 1975; Bormann, Pratt, & Putnam, 1978) have found that groups surface their difficulties concerning the emergence of suitable roles for their members in fantasy chains having double meanings. The overt meaning may relate to people in other contexts but the covert meaning would apply to the group's problems. An observer, facilitator, or instructor can thus use fantasy theme analysis as a diagnostic and therapeutic tool to help the group bring to the surface the hidden agenda items relating to the members' common social and task problems (Bormann, 1975.) Once the problem is diagnosed, the entire group can confront the issue directly and work it through in the here-and-now.

In addition to helping groups work out their internal problems, symbolic convergence theory provides a perspective for the analysis of communication difficulties between or among groups and communities. The approach is useful in studying social conflicts involving abortion, gun control, and labor-management, as well as the global conflicts among nations and nationalist movements. The point can also be

illustrated in terms of communication consultants working in organizational development.

Communication consultants conducting an audit of an organization can use the symbolic convergence theory profitably to study the formal and informal small group cultures and rhetorical visions of various rhetorical communities within the organization, and to find the extent to which members share a common organizational saga. Consultants may use such techniques as individual and group interviews to discover the dramatizing messages, stories, histories, and aneodotes that members tell and retell to one another. Cragan and Shields (1981a) developed a focused group interview technique as an efficient and economical way to discover the symbolic worlds of organizational members. Field observations of chaining fantasies in informal and formal meetings are also useful ways to gather data.

Consultants can find further useful material by reading official written messages such as mission statements, or outlines of organizational and unit goals and plans. Unofficial written messages such as satirical poems, songs, and jokes are important if they spread rapidly and are shared. Jokes, cartoons, and other humorous messages on bulletin boards, company newsletters and magazines, or as graffiti on rest room walls can be important.

Bormann, Howell, Nichols, and Shapiro (1981) have outlined a technique for making a script analysis of fantasy themes, types, and rhetorical visions of various communities within an organization. Once communication consultants have an accurate map of the symbolic landscape of an organization they can examine the various cultures to see if the rhetorical visions share common heroes and villains or fantasy types or values and emotions. Consultants can intervene with groups and units whose members share common symbolic elements and use such techniques as discussion and debate, confrontation and working through to achieve consensus or compromise on issues that cause disagreement and conflict within the organization.

Where the rhetorical visions approach mirror images of one another, the lack of common ground often makes the use of data, evidence, and argument ineffective in managing inter-group conflict. A number of contemporary movements have reached an impasse in discussing the issues that divide them because they are essentially participating in mirror-image rhetorical visions. The moral majority and the secular humanists, the right-to-life and the pro-choice groups, the scientific evolutionists and the scientific creationists, all provide examples of such mirror-image rhetorical visions in symbolic conflict.

Dotlich (1980) used focussed group interviews in three organiza-

tions to study the shared fantasy themes and types relating to women in management. He interviewed samples of groups composed of male upper, middle, and lower managers and female upper, middle, and lower managers. He found the men divided into roughly two rhetorical communities. The women shared a common saga about women in management but were divided about how they should deal with their common problems. Careful analysis of the four rhetorical communities indicated that one community of women could find considerable rhetorical common ground with one of the communities of males. The other community of women had very little in common with the shared fantasies of the other community of men. Indeed, the two communities of men were symbolically so different that communication between participants in the two visions on the question of women managers was difficult.

Assessing communication effects

Symbolic convergence provides a theorietical rationale to study the influence of various communication practices. While the theory can aid practitioners in the assessment of the influence of two-person conferences, small group meetings, lectures, and speeches, the most striking applications to this point have been in the study of mass media effects. Preliminary work on the 1972 campaign (Bantz, 1973; Bormann, 1973; Henderson, 1975; Semlak, 1973) concentrated on the analysis of the content of communication in order to discover the shared fantasies contained in official campaign persuasion as well as in the media coverage of the campaign. These studies provided a detailed and plausible explanation of the relationship among campaign messages, media coverage, and voting behavior.

In the 1976 campaign the investigators broadened the scope of their studies to include the relationship between the media messages and audience effects. Three major investigations (Bormann, Koester, & Bennett, 1978; Cragan & Shields, 1977; Rarick, Duncan, Lee, & Porter, 1977) studied the extent to which the messages resulted in rhetorical communities that shared a common vision of the campaign. These studies further analyzed the extent to which actual voting behavior could be anticipated by participation in the various rhetorical communities. All three studies used small group statistical analysis of Q-sort data.

Bormann *et al.* (1978) illustrate the practical application of symbolic convergence theory to the assessment of media effects. The investigators selected the most frequently alluded-to fantasy themes in a sample of cartoons appearing in the months prior to the election. On

the basis of qualitative analysis of the media rhetorical vision of the campaign, the investigators predicted which of the fantasies was most salient in a sample of voters. The results indicated that there were five discrete rhetorical communities in the 1976 election. For some of the communities, the media emphasis on a given theme was reflected in the member's participation in the fantasy, but for other communities the media stress on a given theme was not reflected in the sharing of the fantasy and in some instances seemed to influence the members of a given vision to reject the fantasy.

In the 1980 presidential campaign, the investigators expanded the Q-sort technique for the assessment of public opinion by utilizing second-stage large-sample polling. Rarick and Bormann (1981) developed a method to shorten Q-sort items for use in telephone interviews. They have also developed a computer program to categorize individuals in the large-sample survey into the factors discovered in the preparatory small-sample Q-sort studies. By utilizing large-sample public opinion polling methods, it becomes possible to chart the inception, rise, evolution, growth, and decline of major rhetorical visions within a mass public.

Enhancing persuasive campaigns

There are three phases to the development and continuance of a rhetorical vision: (a) consciousness creating, (b) consciousness raising, and (c) consciousness sustaining. In the first phase people come to symbolic convergence and create a common consciousness which may contain elements of older visions but is unique in its overall configuration. If the members of the new rhetorical community share a proselytizing fantasy type, they will often embark on a program of consciousness raising (phase 2) in which they intentionally plan their persuasive efforts to gain converts.

Consciousness creating and consciousness raising require people with rhetorical skill in presenting new scenarios in attractive form so people will come to share the new fantasies. Several investigators (Bormann, 1975; Chesebro, Cragan, & McCullough, 1973) have described the nature of consciousness raising groups and their use of fantasy sharing by insiders in intensive sessions where a few potential converts are present. Under the pressure of group conformity, these visitors often are pulled into sharing the basic fantasies of the community. Thus, their internal fantasies are reoriented to converge with the consciousness of the community.

Finally, rhetorical communities tend to disintegrate. Internal power struggles, changing circumstances, and other centrifugal forces cause

members to become lukewarm, to leave for other visions, and so forth. In such circumstances most communities will evolve communication episodes designed to renew the faith, to celebrate the community, and to rekindle the zeal that accompanied the original sharing process (phase 3).

Symbolic convergence theory provides practical guidelines for the planned communication associated with each of the three phases. The ability to design and develop messages with attractive scenarios (fantasy themes) is essential to advertising campaigns, social movements, marketing strategies, and political campaigns. These new scenarios, when shared, create new visions and translate impulses into movements and campaigns.

Symbolic convergence theory explains the chaining of both the nonrational, unconscious, accidental dramas which tap individual psychodynamics or group problems or the collective unconscious (Jung, 1976) and the rational and consciously planned scenarios intentionally designed for their rhetorical effect on a target audience. Sociologists (Bales, 1970; Gibbard, Hartman, & Mann, 1971) and psychiatrists (Demeuse, 1979) have stressed the subconscious nature of group fantasies; Bormann (1972, 1980) has added the rhetorical dimension. The rhetorical explanation is that some fantasies are shared because of the artistry with which they are presented.

Investigators are exploring the implications for practitioners of the ability to chart the nature and extent of rhetorical visions. Cragan and Shields (1977, 1981b) used their analyses of the rhetorical visions on foreign policy in Peoria, Illinois, to write computer-assisted campaign speeches. The practical implications of this are apparent.[1] Cragan and Shields (1981a) have also extended their practical applications to the field of market analysis and, on occasion, followed through from market analysis to the development of advertising themes to implement a persuasive campaign. Bormann and Bormann (1977, 1980) have developed practical guidelines for the application of symbolic convergence theory to public speaking as well as persuasive campaigns.

The use of survey research to document the presence, nature, and scope of rhetorical communities is the first step in the practical application of the theory. In persuasive campaigns the next steps involve drafting suitable fantasy themes and types in order to promulgate the

[1]Their work was the subject of a media blitz ranging from stories in local and regional papers and radio and television news programs to coverage by international wire services, network radio and television, national news magazines, and featured treatment by a CBS science program. For a sample of the editorial responses to this work, see Cragan and Shields (1981a, Chap. 12).

rhetorical visions of the movement or campaign. It is necessary first to discover in much greater detail than is possible with conventional polling techniques what people love and hate, who their heroes and villains are, and how they view the world in relation to an issue or a series of issues. Then fantasy themes are designed that are congruent with their established visions. This application relates to the third phase of consciousness sustaining in which the creating and promulgating of a vision has taken place and the persuasive campaigners adapt their appeals to the established visions. Consciousness creating (phase 1) and consciousness raising (phase 2) pose much more complicated rhetorical problems and require more complicated rhetorical applications usually involving intensive two-person and small group meetings.

Conclusion

The symbolic convergence theory of communication has been applied to a wide variety of settings and proved to be of practical use in the three phases of culture and consciousness building. It has demonstrated usefulness in helping people who work as counselors and consultants in small group and organizational communication. Investigators are also exploring its potential for helping family communication, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, obesity treatment, and in other helping contexts. It is one of the more theoretically consistent and sophisticated bases for market analysis, public opinion polling, and designing persuasive campaigns.

If one test of a communication theory is its practical applications for teachers and consultants, then symbolic convergence qualifies as a promising theory of contemporary communication well adapted to a mass media society.

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SEMIOTIC PHENOMENOLOGY: A THEORY OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION PRAXIS

Richard L. Lanigan

A theory of human communication which we practice as an art or science is a philosophy in the classic sense. This philosophy of communication that we apply as communication science is neither novel nor new as an idea about discourse and the human condition. For example, Carl Sagan (1978) is among the more recent popular philosophers who remind us that "Our learning and our culture would never have developed without speech; our technology and our monuments would never have evolved without hands. In a way, the map of the motor cortex is an accurate portrait of our humanity" (p. 34).

Yet, Plato is the first to see in speech acts (*mutatis mutandis:* gestures) not just words and skills, but the unique theoretical and practical problem of the *logos* of *logos*. This is to say, the problem of theory which is simultaneously and reversibly practice. In a word this is the problem of *communication*. If we read Plato's dialogue the *Sophist* as communication theorists and practitioners, we find a theoretical account of the discourse praxis that belongs respectively to the statesman, sophist, and philosopher. There is a hierarchy of norms present in these persona ranging from the person whose art applies the science of politics, to the person whose art employs the science of pedagogy, and to the person whose art is the science of right thinking (Lanigan, 1982a). As we read the *Sophist*, we scan the text for signs of logic woven into the conceptual fabric of speech and gesture. We seek in the discussion, as does Socrates, the formula by means of which we can construct an insightful answer to a pervasive question. To put it in human science terms, we seek a means of thematizing the problematic: How does human value become social fact?

Defining Communication

Such a problematic focuses our expectation for a theory of human communication praxis by anticipating the force of Plato's maxim: "to

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rob us of discourse would be to rob us of philosophy" (*Sophist:* 260a). Beginning with Plato's maxim and tracing its connection to contemporary speculations like Sagan's is to display the binary analogue logic in behavior that we call *humane*. The Platonic discovery of the binary analogue logic as the *logos* of *logos* is the foundation for the proposition that defines human communication theory and praxis as a semiotic phenomenology. ***Communication is human conscious experience that entails a binary analogue logic*[1].**

Communication so defined specifies two basic elements of understanding. First, all communication is semiotic by force of being constituted and regulated by systems of signs. All such systems contain formal and structural relations between *signifiers* (elements of expression) and *signifieds* (elements of perception). These systems are inherently *binary* since the communicative source (*terminus a quo*) and destination (*terminus ad quem*) are in fact boundary conditions, the first logically necessary and the second sufficient, for the degrees of normative difference established by relations in the system, i.e., the analogue by degree of one term with another (Lyons, 1977, Vol. I, pp. 36-37). Second, all communication is a phenomenology by force of being constituted and regulated by consciousness of experience (the signifier) and its entailment as the experience of consciousness (the signified).

Theorems of Communication

The uniqueness of the binary analogue logic in behavior grounds both the function and nature of human discursive action as conscious experience. This focus on conscious experience requires a brief discussion of general communication logics (Lanigan, 1979a). We are all

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[1] I formalize this definition for ease of manipulation as follows:

$$C_{df} \exists x \supset [(B \bullet A) \rightarrow (E \vee 0)]$$

Legend: C_{df} = Definition of Communication (Binary Analogue)
$\exists$ = Necessary and Sufficient Condition (Existential Quantifier)
x = Relation of Conscious Experience (Hjelmslevian 'Function')
B = First Term Combinatory Functive ("Both" Analogue)
A = Second Term Combinatory Functive ("And" Analogue)
E = Third Term Combinatory Functive ("Either" Digit)
0 = Fourth Term Combinatory Functive ("Or" Digit)
$\bullet$ = Conjunction
$\vee$ = Disjunction
$\rightarrow$ = Entailment
$\supset$ = Implication

familiar with the digital logics (either/or choices) in which rectilinear algorithms prescribe choice procedures in a "given" context, i.e., data. This is the familiar territory of information theory. Human speech and gesture are a prime exemplar. You either speak or you are silent; you either gesture or remain still. Any choice made provides "information," i.e., a probability for the next useful choice. By comparison, there are analogue logics (both/and choices) in which recursive algorithms prescribe choice procedures for selecting contexts as "taken," i.e., capta (Laing, 1967 p. 62). This is the less familiar territory of communication theory. Human speech and gesture are again a prime exemplar. You have both speech and silence when you speak (what is said is concretely contextualized with what is simultaneously not said, but can be said). Also, you have both gesture and its absence (what is done bounds that of which you are capable). Any choice provides a "message," i.e., a defined context of possibility which is normative for the choice made. We find these two logics, digital and analogue, in the generic systems of machine, animal, and human communication (Eco, 1976; Wilden, 1980). Human communication, however, characteristically involves both of these logics as simultaneous and reversible (a semiology). This one feature of uniqueness is enough to distinguish human behavior from that of machines; but, it is not enough to distinguish the human from the animal, because animals do have communication systems that display interacting digital and analogue logics (Sebeok, 1977).

If we add the ability to use one logic to code another, e.g., coding an analogue logic by a digital logic, we discover the uniqueness of a binary analogue logic. This unique element which justifies a claim to separate human from animal communication is the ability to code spatial and temporal placement (or displacement) in one logic by using the second logic to represent placement and displacement respectively. Spatial and temporal placement and displacement are easily seen in the linguistic element of speech which predicates or ascribes as significative present and past referents or future actions (or, gestures that do the same thing in place of speech). Thus, *consciousness* is a referential context that is moved around, fixed, or changed again by mere choice to do so in the coding of the coded system. Yet, such consciousness is always bounded by the human agent, the person, who applies the logic of consciousness to consciousness itself thereby creating *experience*. In short, the concept and practice called "conscious experience" is a normed system of systems, a *logos* of *logos*. Conscious experience combines the binary elements of consciousness and experience, yet distinguishes them as boundary conditions for one another (a

phenomenology). Thus, there is a *logic of phenomena* in which we discover the phenomena are themselves a logic. Or if you prefer, there is a discourse (speech) of behavior (gesture) that we understand as consciousness, and a behavior of discourse which we intuit as experience (Lanigan, 1979b).

Recall my definition of communication: Communication is human conscious experience that entails a binary analogue logic. This definition is itself a construction from four theorems discussed at length elsewhere (Lanigan, 1979c).

1. Theorem of Intentionality: *Conscious experience is the minimal unit of meaning in communication.*

This theorem derives from Edmund Husserl's (1960) proposition that "subjectivity is intersubjectivity." It is associated with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1962) proposition that the *person* (*corps propre*) is the phenomenon of analysis in conscious experience (Lanigan, 1972).

2. Theorem of Punctuation: *The reversibility of expression and perception is the minimal system-code for communication.*

This theorem draws from Ferdinand de Saussure's (1959) and Roland Barthes' (1970) proposition, based on the language theory of Louis Hjelmslev (1969), that speech entails levels of expression and content (perception) that are individually and jointly the result of sign-production. Eco's (1976) construction of the theory of communicational acts, Jürgen Ruesch's (1972) theory of social communication, and Edmund Leach's (1976) theory of cultural communication on the basis of sign-production further support the theorem (Lanigan, 1970, 1979a, 1979b).

3. Theorem of Convention: *The transaction is the minimal rule-governed behavior required for communication.*

This theorem expresses the logical elements in discourse discovered by John L. Austin (1962), H. P. Grice (1967), and John R. Searle (1969). The analogue nature of communicative performance provides analytic insights about the constitution of speech communication which are obscured by simple linguistic description (Lanigan, 1977).

4. Theorem of Legitimation: *Interpersonal speech competency is the minimal norm in society for communication.*

This theorem formulates a key relationship in which the historic fact/value and individual/mass bifurcations are resolved as a ratio of communicative actions. For Jürgen Habermas (1979), Karl-Otto Apel

(1980), and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975) the conjunction of hermeneutic and normative actions explains the community achieved by persons in society (Lanigan, 1981).

Theory and Praxis Application

Theoretical implications and consequent applications as research methods in the study of human communication necessarily rely on a metatheoretical and methodological position (Lanigan, in press-b). Yet, I shall illustrate the four theorems just presented without regard to metatheory and methodology constraints[2]. I shall exemplify each of the theorems with what I consider to be a study which is theoretically insightful, but geared basically to the newcomer in the area of semiotic phenomenology as an applied research method[3]. Suggestions for the direction of communication research will be made.

First, let us examine the "Theorem of Intentionality" by reference to Ihde's (1977) discussion of Husserl. Husserl's extensive research on the logic of consciousness and tests we might apply for correct judgment are present in Ihde's discussion of the famous Necker Cube and other visual objects. By examining the experimental conditions for human perception in an active dialogue with his reader, Ihde demonstrates the observable conditions under which "conscious experience is the minimal unit of meaning in communication." His point is straightforward. In any scientific analysis there is a determinate order of understanding, i.e., what we naively assume to be the "real world." This relation is a normed sequence in which the researcher (a person) engages in certain procedures (acts according to concepts) with a certain subject matter (subjects or objects). In this sequence of events, there is an isomorphism between (1) the sequence set of (a) researcher, (b) theory/method, and (c) subject/object of analysis, and (2) the sequence set of (a) a person's perception, (b) act of conception, and (c) the act of sensation. As Ihde explains, this "positive" approach is fallacious when experimentally tested. In fact, an examination of a person's logic for constituing phenomen (e.g., visual

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[2]An appropriate discussion of these issues as they apply comparatively to qualitative and quantitative research validity is Guba (1981). The patient reader will find a systemic and systematic treatment of the metatheoretical issues in other of my writings on semiotic phenomenology.

[3]The initiation in 1965 and subsequent development of phenomenology as a research program in communication at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale is due largely to the pioneering work of Professor Thomas J. Pace. The studies cited here are largely from this tradition.

images) points to just the reverse sequence as between sets 1 and 2. So from a phenomenological point of view, 2-a entails 1-c, 2-b entails 1-b, and 2-c entails 1-a. This is to say, we have an *order of experience* in set 1 (Experiencer/Experiencing/Experienced) and the *order of analysis* in set 2 (Experienced/Experiencing/Experiencer). The starting point for phenomenological research is a person's perception as the object/subject of analysis which is a conceptualization used as a theory/method to specify a sensation that is a person's conscious experience, i.e., the researcher *in situ* (Brandt, 1970). The consequence by specific reference to the Necker Cube is that the cube does not have just two "real" reversible images as percepts, but an infinite number of "real" percepts as possibility, i.e., concrete placement or instantiation. The number is directly dependent on the observer's ability to abstract (not generalize!) possibility *from the phenomenon* (to hypothesize), rather than fix probability for change by prior conceptual assumption (to hypostatize).

Eason (1977) illustrates this "Theorem of Intentionality" in a mass communication context with his analysis of the journalistic problem of reportage in the nonfiction novel. This research approach blends the writing format of the novel with the factual news story to recreate for the reader the contextual message being reported. Due account is taken of the writer's role in the formulation of meaning as the conscious experience through which the reporter lived. A specific study reflecting this methodology is my analysis of the Attica prison rebellion as reported in Tom Wicker's *A Time to Die* (Lanigan, in press-c).

Second, the "Theorem of Punctuation" has its best illustration in Spiegelberg's (1975) various essays on methodology that blend an accurate concern for the philosophy of science with the standards of rigorous philosophical analysis. Over the years, his contribution to applied understanding clearly focuses on the theme that "the reversibility of expression and perception is the minimal system-code for communication." Spiegelberg discusses the methodological issues in the comparison of phenomenology (praxis) to metaphenomenology (theory). He compares this eidetic problematic of the theoretical researcher to the "workshop approach" in which the direction is empirical and pragmatic. In a parallel context, he takes up the field research dimension of the "vicarious experience" of the individual as an interpersonal agent in a social context. Last, he is a pioneer in explaning phenomenological methods. In his essay on the "Existential Uses of Phenomenology" (1975, pp. 54-71), Spiegelberg provides one of the best accounts available of the methodology that is applied in whole or part by phenomenologists. Merleau-Ponty (1962) presents a slightly

more philosophical account of the procedure covering the three step method of phenomenological description, phenomenological reduction, and phenomenological interpretation.

Turning to actual communication research, Langellier (1980) and Miller (1980) both explore the reversibility of expression and perception as it occurs within the performance context of the oral interpretation of literature. Miller focuses on the relation between the performer and text, while Langellier's concern is the nature and function of audience. In contrast, Sochat (1978) quantitatively explores the semiotic constraints operating in an instructional setting where interviewing skills are being taught to medical students. A further illustration of the "Theorem of Punctuation" is the team research project in which the student/instructor communication and role-modeling was studied phenomenologically as it occurs in SIU's basic interpersonal communication course (Lanigan, Deetz, & Bytwerk, 1981).

Third, the "Theorem of Convention" suggests that the transaction is the minimal rule-governed behavior required for communication. One of the most successful illustrations of this theorem is the research methodology developed by William J. J. Gordon (1968). He calls his method "synectics" and not phenomenology, although even a casual comparison of the synectics method and the descriptive phenomenology of Husserl suggests a direct correlation. The essential feature of Gordon's method is the use of analogues to compare what is familiar with what is unfamiliar. This is a necessary and critical step in any research procedure that is faced with an apparently "unsolvable" problem (like the Necker Cube). The synectics approach refocuses the problem in terms of the researcher's perception, rather than the conception of the problem. Another main feature of the synectics method is the reliance on group communication in a team format.

Whitsett's (1979) study of the Human Sexuality Service division of the Student Health Service at SIU exemplifies the "Theorem of Convention." He used a group communication context to specify phenomenologically how students perceived their conscious experience of sexuality when their conceptions of sexual behavior and norms became dysfunctional within interpersonal settings. Spengler (1975) studied the phenomenon of interpersonal and organizational loneliness using a written survey protocol to gather capta from members of a religious order in the Catholic Church. In this study individual respondent's perceptions could be directly compared to the group conception of conscious experience as a member of the religious community.

The "Theorem of Legitimation" has a focal place in the procedures suggested by Patton (1980) for evaluation research. He ex-

plicitly points out that the roots of contemporary qualitative research strategies are in phenomenology and are directly linked to the interpersonal context, especially where interviewing is a primary form of capta/data collection (pp. 44-48, 198-200). Patton's detailed review of research methodologies grounds the theme that "interpersonal speech competency is the minimal norm in society for communication." Indeed, his guidelines for writing a research report can be read as an outline of the essential features of a phenomenological description, reduction (analysis), and interpretation that should be part of any such research effort (1980, pp. 340-342).

While the empirical studies by Whitsett (1979) and Spengler (1975) just discussed apply equally well to the "Theorem of Legitimation," there are also excellent illustrations of eidetic studies in the work of Peterson, Diekman, and Brooks. Peterson (1980) looks at the normative function of performance as a communication element using the theatre as an exemplar. Diekman (1974) explores the process of existential legitimation in the work of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jacques Lacan, while Brooks (1968) examines the original contribution of the philosopher Henry Nelson Wieman to the problematic of "creative interchange." Further examples of appropriate research in this area can be found in Deetz (1981).

Research Implications

I began with the question "How does human value become social fact?". I suggest that the answer is simply, and thereby profoundly, *communication*. But in an age that obscures both the intension and extension of that term, I propose the definition of semiotic phenomenology that "Communication is human conscious experience that entails a binary analogue logic." Several research implications are apparent in such a thematic position. These implications themselves constitute a set of problematics to be explored.

First, there is the problematic of theory construction. The perspective of semiotic phenomenology asks us to reexamine our heritage in the *trivium*. We tend to conceive of logic, rhetoric, and grammar as "conceptions" to be blindly applied to this or that set of capta/data. Whether the method of analysis is qualitative or quantitative, the conception still dictates. With the contemporary convergence (in the thematic of *understanding*) of the problems of 'text' (in Semiology/Structuralism) and its 'interpretation' (in Phenomenology/Hermeneutics), we have in the approach of semiotic phenomenology an opportunity to reevaluate the theoretical power of the trivium. It is not once again a digital choice to accept or reject the method of the

trivium, but an opportunity to see the analogue power of conjunction. In the Communication discipline, we need to study the systemic and systematic connection among logic, rhetoric, and grammar. In applied research this means the science of communication should become the integration of the disciplines of Philosophy (logic), Communication (rhetoric), and Linguistics (grammar). In short, we should reappraise the trivium in human science terms as a theoretical orientation, i.e., as a thematic research praxis.

Second, there is the problematic of human behavior as the data/capta we study. Semiotic phenomenology provides a methodology in which the *phenomenon* studied can be handled validly as a perceived object (datum) or perceived subject (captum) in a modality that is an empirical value (a boundary norm) or an eidetic value (another boundary norm). This is the valence that is the binary analogue whose empirical and eidetic status is combinatory fact. In short, the human sciences do not have to be modeled on the natural sciences. Both a theory and a method for the valid, scientific study of human communication are available in the innovative work of semiotic phenomenology. The research foundation is already in place[4].

A third problematic, and perhaps the most serious, is the general failure to realize that semiotic phenomenology is a research method with a pedigree that runs as far back as Plato and supports a host of methodological refinements that easily rivals the spectrum of statistical inference models in any good textbook on quantitative methods. There is, in fact, even a school of phenomenology devoted to mathematics (Alperson 1975; Tragesser 1977), so even the procedural ability to formalize capta/data is available. The direct implication for research is the need for adequately trained researchers. Much of the justifiable criticism of semiotics and phenomenology in the U.S.A. stems from research or attempts at research by "one course wonders" whose entire preparation for phenomenological research is a graduate school lecture course or a self-taught sense of purpose gleaned from a few journal articles or books. In this context also, semiotic phenomenology suffers

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[4]In addition to the work mentioned in this essay with respect to SIU's Department of Speech Communication, parallel efforts are occurring in the Department of Sociology at Boston University (Psathas, 1973), in the Department of Psychology at Duquesne University (Giorgi, Fischer, & Von Eckartsberg, 1971; Giorgi, Fischer, & Murray, 1975; Giorgi, Knowles, & Smith, 1979), and in the Department of Linguistics at SUNY-Buffalo (Mathiot, 1978). Semiotic phenomenology also has an established place in the human science disciplines in Europe. Latin, and South America. Part of the limited influence of this vast research literature is, of course, the typical inability of the American (USA) academic to speak a language beside English.

to a certain extent by being a "research fad." The result is tagging various journal articles as "semiotic" or "phenomenological" or "hermeneutic" in order to gain publication. In most cases, they turn out to be an uninformed use of linguisitic theory ("semiotics") or a report on psychological speculation ("phenomenology"). It should not be surprising to learn, then, that in the larger international community of scholars, the leading journals for reporting communication research are *Semiotica* and *Communication* (Paris).

The thematic that emerges from the three aspects of the problematic before us is fairly clear. As a discipline we need to rethink our uniqueness. We do not need to follow other disciplines, least of all those in the natural sciences. We do need to assert our leadership on the basis of the rather impressive results achieved since the writing of Aristotle's *Organon*. We need a theory and a method of human science that builds on this history. I think semiotic phenomenology is a good possibility. Last, we who use semiotic phenomenology as theoreticians and practitioners need to pool our resources and set some identified standards for the work we do. The first step occured in a conference at Northwestern University by founding the Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences and adopting *Human Studies* as the society's official research journal[5]. The next step will be the applied research we do.

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BOOK REVIEWS:

CONTEMPORARY HUMAN COMMUNICATION THEORIES

Message-Attitude-Behavior Relationship: Theory, Methodology, and Application. Edited by Donald P. Cushman and Robert D. McPhee. New York: Academic Press, 1980, pp. xii + 339. $27.00.

If the volume of research generated is an indication of the centrality of a subject to a discipline, the message-attitude-behavior relationship is central to a number of the social sciences. The subject is a perplexing one, both conceptually and methodologically. Cushman and McPhee's book attacks the problems head on by providing exemplars of the latest in theory construction and theoretically-grounded research methodology. At the same time the book is introspective and self-reflexive in its rigorous criticism of the theory and methodology presented. In so doing, the book provides a valuable resource for practicing researchers as well as students of theory construction, research methodology, and persuasion.

The organization of the book reflects the wide variety of available approaches to the message-attitude-behavior relationship. The introductory chapter, by Cushman and McPhee provides an overview of the theoretical and methodological contributions that follow. In this chapter the reader is introduced to or reminded of the problems inherent in attitude research beginning with conceptual ambiguity within the problem itself, e.g., is "attitude" a predisposition that is linked necessarily with consistency in behavior, or can "attitude" be described as a more general, affective evaluation of an object that is measurable by a questionnaire that may or may not be related to consistent behavioral response? The introductory chapter is useful and effective in identifying issues and assumptions that should be of concern to the theorist/researcher, while introducing the chapters that follow.

Chapters 2-6 provide clear descriptions of theoretical perspectives and methodological strategies for studying the message-attitude-behavior relationship. These chapters are exciting and fresh contributions by Hewes, Woelfel, D. O'Keefe, Capella and Folger, and Seibold, and represent some of the newest and richest ideas in theory and methodology. An especially noteworthy aspect of these chapters is the authors'

uniform attention to explication of their theoretical perspectives and biases before launching into discussion of methodology. Indeed this is one of the major strengths of the book; the authors *begin* with theory construction and *then select, and in some cases develop, methodologies* that are congruent with that theoretical perspective.

Chapters 7-10 discuss theoretical issues raised in the previous five chapters. Poole and Hunter examine the utility of deterministic modeling and present a hierarchical model of attitude organization and change. Craig raises problems with traditional approaches and proposes the point of view of the actor as a supplemental but necessary component of message-attitude-behavior theory and research. Larkin extends Wittgenstein's position on meaning to a discussion of intention and attitude. These articles are carefully reasoned, innovative and insightful. They challenge traditional conceptualizations of the message-attitude-behavior relationship while offering fresh perspectives.

This book is more than a compendium of the latest theory and research on the message-attitude-behavior relationship. It is a piece of sound scholarship that advances significantly our understanding of some of the perplexing problems in theory construction and research methodology. While challenging traditional approaches and offering new ones, it is intensely self-critical. Not only are theories, methods, and arguments presented, but the philosophical and methodological assumptions underlying these are examined, and biases and limitations identified. Indeed, the final chapter by Gerald Miller provides a lively criticism that calls into question the very presence of attitude as an intervening variable oetween message and behavior in our theory and research.

Message-Attitude-Behavior Relationship: Theory, Methodology, and Application belongs in the library of any serious communication theorist or researcher.

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APPLIED COMMUNICATION RESEARCH: A DRAMATISTIC APPROACH. By John F. Cragan and Donald C. Shields. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1981, pp. x + 421. $17.95.

Communication research methods are typically aimed at theory generation and testing, and that is probably their most proper focus. Yet the emphasis on theory has resulted in a paucity of systematic approaches for studying specific situations such as individual persuasive

campaigns or the cultures of individual organizations. Exploratory and descriptive techniques such as interviews, participative observation, and surveys are all limited in their ability to describe how people communicate in these situations. Thus, the potential contribution of any book presenting an alternative method for doing applied communication research is great. In some ways this book fulfills that potential; in other ways it does not.

Cragan and Shields' method is grounded in Ernest Bormann's symbolic convergence theory of communication. Bormann's theory posits that groups produce communicative identities by sharing what he calls "fantasy themes." Defined as characteristic of talk that does not focus on the "here and now," fantasy themes may chain together to form dramas containing characters, settings, and scenarios. The most general form of these dramas Bormann calls a "rhetorical vision."

What Cragan and Shields have done is to create a systematic means for applying Bormann's theory. Their method consists of four steps. First, potential messages about the situation under study are collected. Second, the messages are analyzed to find competing rhetorical visions. Third, each vision is examined for its dramatic structure, major scenarios, and specific issues. Cards representing each vision's view of each of these elements are prepared as a Q-sort and submitted to a sample of people involved in the situation. Finally, the responses to the Q-sort are analyzed by Q-type factor analysis. This technique differs from typical R-type factor analysis in that it indicates how people grouped with respect to items rather than how items grouped with respect to people. Also, information about the sorters is sometimes collected and submitted to discriminant analysis to determine if a set of variables can predict identification with one of the visions over the others.

The method is outlined in the first part of the book. The following four parts present studies applying the method to the analysis of contemporary rhetoric, to political campaigns, to organizational communi cation, and to market research. The sixth part contains an interview outline and a Q-deck for one of the studies, along with an essay by Shields positing and applying guidelines for critiquing factor analytic studies. Of the twenty-four individual entries, a number were previously published or were written for other occasions, including four published in *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* one in *Communication Monographs,* and one in *Fire Chief Magazine.* Six were technical reports to a private agricultural firm, and one was presented at a Central States Speech Association Convention. Of the remaining eleven entries, two are introductory, four present applications of the method, one is a

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collection of editorial reactions to Cragan and Shields' "computer generated" foreign policy speech for the 1976 presidential campaign, one is a "testimonial" about the value of the method written by a market analyst, two address methodological issues, and the last is the aforementioned essay on factor analysis. All but five were authored or coauthored by Cragan and/or Shields, including three by Ernest Bormann.

The strengths of this method for researching the communicative qualities of specific situations are easily discerned. First, and most important, the locus of study lies in the messages generated within the situation under study. The payoff for the communication researcher comes in the lack of need to infer what communication is from studying differences in individuals and groups; rather, people can be classified from their patterns of identification with messages. Second, because the method is "data rich," specific inferences can be made about the characteristics of groups holding both majority and minority visions. Finally, the insights obtained from this method seem, for the most part, nonobvious; yet the conclusions of the individual research reports make good conceptual sense.

The method's weaknesses are not as evident. If one disputes the claims of Bormann's theory (and such disputers exist in large enough numbers to make the theory a controversial one), then the entire method is of little value. The papers contained in this volume are not much help in overcoming suspicions about fantasy theme analysis as the starting point for this method, because they are all vague as to how this analysis is accomplished. Obviously, a large number of messages is examined for fantasy themes, but how big is "large" and how the data are reduced to form visions is never explained.

A second set of weaknesses stems from the necessity of using small sample sizes in the Q-sort phase. Though Shields thoroughly defends the validity of results obtained from small samples in his essay on factor analysis, some concerns not directly related to the statistical technique are relevant. Small samples are particularly susceptible to sampling error, especially when more than one vision is involved. To compensate for this problem the researchers must formulate the most general visions possible so that each vision can accommodate the maximum number of subjects. Overly neat formulations of the visions seem to result in some cases. Each vision must then be represented by one Q-deck card for each issue in the analysis. With three visions and twenty issues, a typical design, it would be easy for subjects to recognize that differing points of view are being presented in the sort. Once such

recognition occurs, assimilation and contrast effects could bias the sorting behavior.

Cragan and Shields serve themselves better as writers than as editors, and the book's format does not aid either the reader with the kinds of concerns I have described or the reader without some knowledge of basic techniques of applied research. Chapter three, where the method is first introduced, would be understandable if the rest of the book had already been read, but it assumes too much knowledge to be useful to the uninitiated reader. The individual studies are appropriately grouped, though all of the essays in Part Two employ only the rhetorical criticism phase of the method. Unfortunately, in simply reprinting these studies, Cragan and Shields leave the reader with seemingly endless explications of Bormann's theory and the basic form of the method. Some communication analysts may delight in examining the different ways in which this catechism is presented, but most readers will simply yawn.

Finally, while no method is inherently ethical or unethical, it seems that the method presented here could be put to some particularly unethical uses. This issue is brushed off in the book, while the authors should have addressed ways to maintain ethical integrity while using the method.

Whether or not one ultimately questions the underlying theory, the techniques employed, or the method's ethical implications, this book should be read by anyone interested in applied communication research.

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HUMAN COMMUNICATION THEORY: COMPARATIVE ESSAYS. Edited by Frank E. X. Dance. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1982. pp. xiv + 289. $15.00.

"This volume," says the editor, "is a presentation for comparative purposes of a number of the most visible theories currently being proposed by scholars who are identified primarily with the academic field of speech communication" (pp. xi-xii). Dance collected six such theories and added one of his own. He also commissioned an opening essay on theory building and a penultimate overview of contributions made by other disciplines. The final essay is Dance's comparative overview of the theories. I shall concentrate on the seven theoretical essays.

The first contribution is by C. R. Berger and W. Douglas and has

the engaging title, "Thought and Talk: 'Excuse Me, But Have I Been Talking to Myself?' " Rather than develop Berger's work on interpersonal epistemology, Berger and Douglas follow the leads of Abelson and Langer by arguing that the "prevalence of scripted behavior at low awareness levels" has profound implications for communication theory and research. They indicate that Berger has modified his own thought in response to this work done outside the field.

The second contribution is "The Coordinated Management of Meaning" (CMM) by V. E. Cronen, W. B. Pearce, and L. M. Harris. Acknowledging that this rules theory is not fully elaborated, they call it a "departure point." They also abjure reviewing the research generated by CMM because it is available elsewhere. That is regrettable because the theory is so eclectic that the reader may have doubts about how to gather and analyze data relevant to the confirmation or disconfirmation of CMM.

Next, "A Rules Theory of Interpersonal Relationships," is offered by D. P. Cushman, B. Valentinsin, and D. Dietrich. Unlike CMM, this rules theory is based on von Wright's practical syllogism. The authors rely almost entirely on data published by other researchers (including some published by the rival theorist Delia) and in many crucial cases, data published by researchers in other fields. If one were to accept this theory as a guide to research, it would be necessary to check carefully the interpretations of others' data—particularly those data collected and analyzed by researchers working within a different paradigm.

The next essay is devoted to Dance's "Speech Theory of Human Communication" (STHC). "The theory's goal," wrote Dance, "is to argue, as elegantly and parsimoniously as possible, that the fact that human language is spoken can serve in a major way to explain other important attributes of human communication" (p. 121). This essay has a taxonomy, pretheoretical propositions, theoretical propositions, and a glossary (which, alas, does not include the key word used in a crucial claim: "mentation"). Although two hypotheses derived from STHC are quoted from dissertations done at University of Denver, no research evidence is introduced in support of the theory.

J. G. Delia, B. J. O'Keefe, and D. J. O'Keefe present the case for "The Constructivist Approach to Communication." Longer by fifty percent than even the longest companion essay, this piece is the most complete and carefully articulated position in the book. They trace the philosophy of science and philosophical anthropology on which constructivism is based; they outline the theoretical commitments and research foci of their approach. Their general orientation to the research enterprise is the most thoughtful I have seen in the field of

communication, achieved partly by avoiding the fallacy of subordinating theory to methods and by facing the difficult research dilemmas of rigor and reliability vs. relevance and validity. I offer one minor criticism. Logically speaking, a philosophy of science and philosophical anthropology should be articulated *prior* to a substantive theory and its program of research. To judge from publication dates cited in this essay, Delia and associates have, temporally speaking, reversed the order. It is difficult to imagine a committed researcher pausing to search for the best possible *Weltanschauungen* rather than pausing to search for the one that best fits the program underway. It is, however, to the credit of Delia and the O'Keefes that they have developed a *Weltanschauungen,* a theory, and a research program. Even if out of order temporally, they practice a "reflective empiricism" in which all parts of the approach appear to be continually checked against each other for signs of inconsistancy.

B. Aubrey Fisher gives "The Pragmatic Perspective of Human Communication: A View from System Theory." As the title indicates, this chapter takes general systems theory as a place from which to view a perspective—the work of the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto. Editor Dance says Fisher's contribution, "edging as it does toward the metatheoretical, has the broadest range of any of the essays." I agree.

The final essay, "All Is for One But One Is Not for All: A Conceptual Perspective of Interpersonal Communication," was written by G. R. Miller and M. J. Sunnafrank. As the subtitle reveals, this is not a theory. It is a pedagogical stance first offered in an interpersonal textbook by Miller and Steinberg (1975). By stressing the case in which one person wants to "control" the other, it is a *rhetorical* theory of interpersonal communication. One person attempts to control the other by "predicting" the probable consequences of his or her messages. Prediction is aided by an *audience analysis* of the "cultural," "sociological," and "psychological information" gleaned from the other. Much of the research cited in support of this stance was conducted by Berger. Oddly, Dance says in his overview that the Berger-Douglas position is somewhat at odds with that of the Miller-Sunnafrank position—without explaining why. The explanation is this: Berger indicates in the opening essay that his own earlier work (cited by Miller and Sunnafrank) suffers from "overattribution of thoughtfulness" and has since been significantly modified (p. 54).

Frankly, if this volume represents faithfully the field of speech communication, we have only one candidate for the status of a full-blown theory, and that candidate is constructivism. Among the con-

tributors to this volume, only the constructivists have in the main generated their own philosophy of science, their own philosophical anthrology, their own research strategy, and their own research data. There are key references to Kelley and Crockett, but Delia and associates have established constructivism as a *communication* theory.

Was this book therefore premature? No, even if we embarrass ourselves with it. I say no because I doubt we have here the best work even of those who contributed to the book. I say no because others in speech communication might well have been invited to contribute. Finally, I say no because this book forces us to ask hard questions and yet allows us to profit from the scrutiny of our failures as well as our too few successes.

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COMMUNICATION, ACTION, AND MEANING: THE CREATION OF SOCIAL REALITIES. By W. Barnett Pearce and Vernon E. Cronen. New York: Praeger, 1980; pp. 340. $29.95.

Those having given only a cursory glance to research reported in the speech communication literature over the last several years should be aware that the authors of this volume have been leading proponents of a coorientation approach to the study of interpersonal communication conceptualized as the coordinated management of meaning. This volume offers a bit of history about the development of the approach, a justification and explication of it, and a review of some research operationalizing it.

However, as the authors warn the reader in the beginning pages, the presentation of the approach is "leisurely" in nature. In fact, the theory itself is not directly addressed until more than one-third of the volume has been digested. In a lengthy preface to the theory the authors begin by aligning themselves with the growing number of interpretive theories in social science which deny the mechanistic assumptions of traditional normative theories positing external causal agents determining human behavior. Social order is created and maintained through communication, they argue, and only through understanding the processes of communication can humans, as active agents, free themselves from the illusion of being controlled and become maximally competent social beings. A key process in this liberation and one which any theory must explain is recognition of the human capacity for "recursive wonder" which is defined as the ability to think about

thinking about thinking . . . etc. They contend any adequate theory of communication, being a reality construction at some level, must be reflexive; must be able to account for itself and hence people's ability to transcend and think about it.

These ideas are briefly stated in the first chapter and offered again in more detail in the third chapter as a "new idea of communication" in which the study of communication as the coordinated management of meaning is grounded. While readers familiar with theoretical developments in social science since the 1960's will find these ideas as less than "new," the authors define this idea of communication as new in the context of the history of human intellectual thought. They offer a sweeping review of that history and the differing conceptualizations of communication within it in chapter two. The review is broad (examining Buddhist, Taoist, Platonic, Aristotelian, Roman, Levantine, and contemporary humanist logics to name a few), necessarily abbreviated in its analysis, sometimes meandering (the relevance of some discussions to the emergence of a new idea of communication is not always clear), but nevertheless interesting. In fact, for the reader not already enmeshed in coorientation research this will be the most interesting facet of the volume.

The culmination of this intellectual pilgrimage is, of course, the new idea of communication which, if accepted, renders positivist and traditional systems approaches to social science inadequate. Why these positions are no longer tenable is not clearly established in the text itself. Advocates of these positions will not be convinced, but those familiar with the numerous and detailed critiques of the positions in extant literature will find the arguments offered here for their dismissal correct if somewhat indexical.

The presentation of "the theory of the coordinated management of meaning" is made in chapter five. That presentation will prove heavy going even for those already generally familiar with the position. No clear organizing principle emerges in the discussion of the various issues and the depth of explanation of ideas is very uneven. There is also a propensity to create new terms or to use familiar terms in novel ways in explaining theoretical concepts. While that procedure is useful to differentiate new ideas from similar ones with more familiar labels, it is not always clear here how the novelly labeled concepts differ from already familiar ones.

What does emerge from the discussion is an outline of a theory grounded in the dramatistic metaphor of reality as an "undirected play." People wander about within "a large space with indistinct . . . boundaries within which are many clusters of objects, haphazardly

arranged" (p. 120). Each person *is* a "cluster of episodes" defined by the person as a part of his/her "life-script" (p. 137). S/he searches for those who share similar scripts or with whom s/he can improvise a scene. Each of these self clusters is a system with its own logic which, when enmeshed in a scene with another, produces an interpersonal system with its own logic which is itself in a "holonic" Janus-faced relation with other systems.

The introduction of the concept of various systems levels into the theory greatly increases the degree of ambiguity and vagueness in the presentation of the theory. Yet the idea seems crucial since in chapter six we learn the criteria for competent communication is the ability to move effectively amidst these different system logics. The authors' main concern is to account for the emergence of *inter*personal systems from the *intra*personal systems of individuals. The relationship is not summative, they argue, but exactly what the relationship is or might be expected to be is not at all clear in the explication of the theory nor in its conceptualization of communication competence.

The presentation of ten studies testing the theory in chapter seven helps in clarifying some of the concepts and relationships among interpersonal processes suggested by the theory. However, given that many of the studies employ simulated and recalled conversations as the basis for testing hypotheses, they must be seen as only the bare beginnings of an attempt to operationalize and test the abstract formulations of interpersonal processes proposed earlier in the volume.

Communication, Action, and Meaning is a challenging and often interesting work. Those interested in theory will find it suggestive, containing much food for thought about how to capture theoretically the active, open-ended phenomena of interpersonal communication. However, in lieu of further conceptual development and empirical extensions, the question of whether the "theory of the coordinated management of meaning" can be successfully applied to that task is, at the very least, an open one.

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Rigor and Imagination: Essays From the Legacy of Gregory Bateson. Edited by C. Wilder-Mott and John H. Weakland. New York: Praeger, 1981, pp. xviii + 416. $37.50 (cloth) or $11.95 (paper).

This commemorative volume goes a long way toward justifying its evocative title. As the occasion of these eighteen essays was the Asilomar

conference celebrating the vision and work of the late Gregory Bateson, I will briefly sketch a central theme of Bateson's animating vision of social science and conclude with a brief comment on the import of the essays.

Gregory Bateson was a singlular figure in contemporary social thought. To call him a Darwinian mystic is paradoxical and accurate. His initial insights stem from evolutionary biology. Bateson's ability to draw instructive parallels between human society and the biophysical world has made his work a sustained source of insight for various branches of social science from anthropology to psychiatry. A central understanding Bateson took from Darwinism is the assumption that order is imminent in nature. Bateson's picture of nature's order is captured in the term "stochastic." By "stochastic" Bateson means "a sequence of events which combines a random component with a selective process so that only certain outcomes of the random are allowed to endure" (*Mind and Nature*, p. 253). When one combines this understanding with the insight that the pattern of human intellectual discovery is also stochastic, one locates the experience which precipitated his distinguishing symbol, "the pattern that connects." Bateson's work articulates an updated Heraclitean vision in which one logos moves through all. He offers his readers a social science recommended by its results—i.e. the "double bind theory—and fruitful in heuristic suggestiveness—indeed as this very volume proves—whose mystical component, to borrow a phrase from George Steiner, "reconciles the rim of private experience with the hub of the great wheel of being." To a generation of social scientists convinced of the sterility of positivism but unsure of what else science can be, Bateson understandably has wide appeal.

The merits of Bateson's alternative vision of science and of his several contributions to various sciences is succinctly set forth in the essay by Stephen Toulmin, which alone would justify purchase of this volume. Toulmin's essay, "The Charm of The Scout," does a splendid job of pointing out the way in which all of Bateson's work grows from a naturalism whose aim is to understand the survival significance of communication systems. Toulmin's comments are balanced between detailed enumeration of Bateson's varied contributions to anthropology and to the social sciences and a brief but incisive critique of aspects of the positivist legacy that has dogged Bateson, even in his efforts to leave it behind. From the essays contributed in this volume, as I shall note presently, it would appear that some of the same difficulties dog the steps of his followers. Especially helpful is Toulmin's placing of Bateson as a "post-modern" social scientist who has pioneered in the effort to "reinsert humanity into nature" and thus do away with the

view of the human scientist as a "rational onlooker from the outside." And no less helpful is Toulmin's response to the overstatement in *Mind and Nature* that has apparently troubled many of Bateson's readers much less than it should: "Epistemology is always and inevitably *personal*. The point of the probe is always in the heart of the explorer: What is *my* answer to the question of the nature of knowing?" (p. 98). The core of Toulmin's response is the following paragraph.

> But what differentiates one legitimate scientific point of view or mode of description from another is not anything personal; e.g., the fact that this is *my* point of view and that is *yours*. Rather it is the fact that scientists are always free to approach any set of natural events and processes with a variety of legitimate purposes; and each of these alternative approaches generates, as a by-product, its own distinct modes of description and styles of explanation, which—for methodological, not for personal reasons—are never in direct contradiction with one another. (p. 368)

Toulmin's essay and critique, a critique solidly supporting Bateson's work and the general research paradigm explored by the many able contributors to this volume, deserves careful study by social scientists anxious to move beyond positivism but unsure of their epistemological ground.

I will conclude with an observation on what these helpful essays reveal about the status of communication research in the post-positivist age.

From the standpoint of the late twentieth century, positivism appears to have been an artificial relaxation of critical intelligence induced by methodological hypnosis. In light of this definition, several of the essays in this volume appear to suffer from post-positivist hypnotic suggestion. The essays echo a litany of apology for actual or potential "subjective" or "relativistic" thinking. Curiously these are covered time and again with appropriate pieties from eastern religion. The ubiquity of these pieties suggests a widespread, but dimly perceived, awareness on the part of various of the authors that articulate recovery of metaphysics may be a necessary step in the current epistomlogical revolution—a step no one has yet been willing to face directly. It would be interesting to know the responses of the various authors if they could be confronted with the missing half of their research paradigm in the works of Eric Voegelin and Bernard Lonergan. On balance, it seems fair to say that this first generation of post-positivist communication researchers are not entirely confident in their new-found freedom and that beneath the beaming surface affirmations is an under-

current of doubt not to be confused with a Socratic knowledge of ignorance.

Perhaps it will require another generation for the cloud of positivism to lift fully. When this happens, social scientists will have less occasion to apologize for their methods. The half light of the present will surrender to the returning dawn of Aristotle's insight that once the proper degree of rigor has been achieved relative to the field of inquiry and the question asked, to require further precision is to misunderstand science altogther.

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